

Poland Under Nazi Occupation

By

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From their experiences during the hostilities, the Polish people realized that occupation by the Nazis would be grim. But no one ever imagined that it would be an uninterrupted succession of crimes, committed not only in cold blood and with premeditation but with the utmost viciousness and ingenuity. True, the very first days of the war had shown that the Nazi invader was devoid of any humanitarian feelings and had no respect for international conventions or rules for the conduct of war. In its first raids on Polish towns, the Luftwaffe had bombed residential areas without any delusion that they were military objectives. Any idea that perhaps these were mistakes was dispelled by the dropping of fragmentation and incendiary bombs on small suburban settlements and on hospitals and hospital trains clearly marked with red crosses on their roofs. There was also the strafing of defenceless civilians escaping along the roads and fields from the burning villages and towns before the rapid advance of the Germans. Every day brought reports of atrocities being committed by the Wehrmacht in the territories they had overrun. There was news of the shooting of soldiers who had been taken prisoner and of the ill-treatment and slaughter, on any excuse or even completely without any justification, of innocent civilians, particularly Jews.

The occupation authorities proved themselves as brutal and vicious, as devoid of all human feelings and careless of law as the military. This was something that all the countries occupied by the Third Reich were to experience to a greater or lesser degree. It sprang from the very core of the political programme of Nazism which planned the triumphant conclusion of the war to be followed by a complete transformation of Europe, particularly the East.

The "New Order" in Europe

For many centuries the urge to expand eastwards has been a part of German history. To start with, the main aim of this *Drang nach Osten* was the extension of the German frontiers at the expense of the Slav territories lying to the East. With the rise of modern German imperialism, which accompanied the rapid economic development in the 19th century, the field of ambition was considerably widened.

A relatively insignificant conquest of territory around its eastern borders was not enough for Imperial Germany; it was aiming at economic and political expansion far to the East. These imperialist objectives were taken over and considerably enlarged by Nazi Germany.

Drawing on the pseudo-scientific theory of racism, Nazism created its own version according to which the German people presented the highest virtues of mankind in the world and formed a race of supermen (*Übermensch*). In the context of this theory it was not difficult to build up a myth about the historical mission of the German nation and its sacred task to impose its authority on the whole of Europe and eventually on the whole world.

Almost from the first moment that Hitler came to power, the leaders of the Third Reich and the National Socialist Party began to make preparations for the conquest of Europe and the creation of a "Thousand-Year Reich." In addition to the eco-

conomic, military and strategic preparations, the expansion of the war industry, the storing of supplies, the training of the future troops, and the drafting of plans for aggression on individual countries, a blueprint was also drawn up for a new order in Europe to follow the successful conclusion of a war that was still to be launched. The rulers of the Third Reich never for a second doubted that this was a war that they could not and would not lose.

In these plans for the future political shape of Europe, the foremost place was occupied by the East, since the western part of the territories lying to the east of Germany were to increase the *Lebensraum* of the Nazi *Herrenvolk*. The vast areas lying further to the East were to become an enormous German sphere of influence reaching deep into the heart of Asia. All these plans for the future organization of Europe were frequently discussed by Hitler and his closest colleagues.

As far as Eastern Europe was concerned, the details had already been worked out before the aggression on Poland. However, they were modified and revised until finally, at the beginning of 1940, there emerged the "The General Plan for the East" (*Generalplan Ost*).

No all-embracing document of this sort was ever drawn up for Western Europe. Nevertheless there are several recorded pronouncements by Hitler and leading representatives of the Nazi regime which show only too clearly that Western Europe was also destined to be radically transformed.

To illustrate this, it is worth quoting the directives of Hitler dealing with the future policy of the Reich towards the West European powers, released to a narrow group of his colleagues at a conference on June 19, 1940. Among the things he said was: "Luxembourg is to be incorporated into the German Reich, Norway annexed. Alsace and Lorraine will once more become parts of Germany. An independent state will be set up in Brittany. Under consideration is the question of Belgium, particular-

ly the problem of treating the Flemish in a special way and of forming a state of Burgundy.”*

Thus the whole of Europe was to be the victim of the Nazi imperialist plans; there can be little doubt that the whole world was included in their further schemes.

“Generalplan Ost”

As has already been mentioned, the future of the East had been decided in what was known as *Generalplan Ost*. It is interesting, and not without significance, that the body responsible for the drafting of this plan was the Reich Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* — RSHA), that is, an agency whose task was to combat all enemies of Nazism and Nazi Germany. It was a strictly confidential document, and its contents were known only to those in the topmost level of the Nazi hierarchy. Unfortunately not a single copy could be found after the war among the documents in German archives. Nevertheless, that such a document existed is beyond doubt. It was confirmed by one of the witnesses in Case VIII before the American Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, SS-Standartenführer, Dr. Hans Ehlich, who as a high official in the RSHA was the man responsible for the drafting of *Generalplan Ost*. Apart from this, there are several documents which refer to this plan or are supplements to it.

The principal document which makes it possible to recreate with a great deal of accuracy just what was contained in *Generalplan Ost* is a memorandum of April 27, 1942 entitled: *Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers SS* (Opinion and Ideas Regarding the General Plan for

* Confidential note drawn up in Göring's Headquarters on June 20, 1940 (Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes in Poland — 600/40 x/VIII).

the East of the Reichsführer SS).^{*} Its author was Dr. Erich Wetzel, the director of the Central Advisory Office on Questions of Racial Policy at the National Socialist Party (*Leiter der Hauptstelle Beratungsstelle des Rassenpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP*). This memorandum is in a way an elaboration of *Generalplan Ost* — a detailed description of Nazi policy in Eastern Europe.

The evidence of Hans Ehlich showed that the final version of the Plan came into being in 1940. It was preceded by a number of studies and research projects carried out over several years by various academic centres to provide the necessary facts and figures. The preliminary versions were discussed by Himmler and his most trusted colleagues even before the outbreak of war. This was mentioned by SS Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski during his evidence as a prosecution witness in the trial of officials of the SS Main Office for Race and Settlement.

The final version of *Generalplan Ost* was made up of two basic parts. The first, known as *Kleine Planung*, covered the immediate future. It was to be put into practice gradually as the Germans conquered the areas to the east of their pre-war borders. The individual stages of this "Little Plan" would then be worked out in greater detail. In this way the plan for Poland was drawn up at the end of November, 1939.

The second part of the Plan, known as *Grosse Planung*, dealt with objectives to be realized after the war was won. They were to be carried into effect gradually and relatively slowly over a period of 25-30 years.

Generalplan Ost presented the Nazi Reich and the German people with gigantic tasks. It called for the gradual preparation of a vast area of Eastern Europe for settlement by Germans and

^{*} This memorandum was used in Case VIII of the American Military Tribunal — the trial of an official in the SS Main Office for Race and Settlement (*SS-Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt*); it was signed NG 2325.

eventual absorption into the great Thousand-Year Reich. This area covered territory stretching from the eastern borders of Germany more or less to a line running from Lake Ladoga in the north to the Black Sea in the region of the Crimea in the south. The Thousand-Year Reich was thus to absorb the whole of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic countries excepting Finland, (for the moment) and a huge chunk of the Soviet Union — most of Russia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the whole of the Crimea. According to the Plan, these areas were to be “germanized” before being incorporated into the Reich.

The Nazi document uses the term “Germanization of Eastern Territories” (*Eindeutschung der Ostgebiete*). This phrase might suggest that the author of the Plan had in mind the Germanization of the native populace of these areas. However, it is clear from the further wording of the plan that any attempt to Germanize the Slav nations of Eastern Europe was never in the reckoning. On the contrary, the Plan stipulated that these Slav territories would be settled by Germans while the vast majority of the native populace would be gradually pushed out. Only an insignificant number was to be Germanized. In short, *Generalplan Ost* provided for the expulsion of millions of people, primarily Slav nations, from their homes and the settlement of Germans in their place. This would have been an enormous task requiring a fairly long period of time and a formidable effort. For it would be easier to expel the people living in these areas than to find a sufficient number of Germans to repopulate them. The Plan, drawing on the material collected in the preliminary stages, concluded that 31 million people would have to be deported in the course of 25 years. However, in his 1942 memorandum, Dr. Wetzel revised this figure (taking into account certain territorial changes, natural increase, etc.) and arrived at a total of 51 million.

At the time when Wetzel was writing his comments, *Generalplan Ost* had ceased to be merely a blueprint. Its first part, the *Kleine Planung*, was already being put into practice. The west-

ern areas of Poland had been incorporated into the Reich, hundreds of thousands of Poles had been expelled from them, and further deportations were in progress. Hundreds of thousands of Poles were dying in various concentration camps, while millions of Jews, herded into ghettos and still ignorant of their fate, were awaiting "the final solution of the Jewish problem." The rulers of the Third Reich were in a hurry to carry out their criminal plans while there was still a war to divert the attention of the world from what was going on in Eastern Europe.

Plans for the Baltic Nations

According to Nazi intentions, attempts at Germanization were to be undertaken only in the case of those foreign nationals in Eastern Europe who could be considered a desirable element for the future Reich from the point of view of its racist theories. The Plan stipulated that there were to be different methods of treating particular nations and even particular groups within them. Attempts were even made to establish the basic criteria to be used in determining whether a given group lent itself to Germanization. These criteria were to be applied more liberally in the case of nations whose racial material (*rassische Substanz*) and level of cultural development made them more suitable than others for Germanization. The Plan considered that there were a large number of such elements among the Baltic nations. Dr. Wetzel felt that thought should be given to a possible Germanization of the whole of the Estonian nation and a sizable proportion of the Latvians. On the other hand, the Lithuanians seemed less desirable since they contained too great an admixture of Slav blood. Himmler's view was that almost the whole of the Lithuanian nation would have to be deported to the East.

Whatever happened, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were to be deprived of their statehood, while their territories were to be included in the eastern area of German settlement. This

meant that Latvia and especially Lithuania would be covered by the deportation plans, though in a somewhat milder form than the Slav — “voluntary” emigration to western Siberia.

Slav Nations

Under *Generalplan Ost*, all Slavs unfit for Germanization were to be expelled from the areas marked out for German settlement. In considering the fate of the individual nations, the architects of the Plan decided that it would be possible to Germanize about 50 per cent of the Czechs, 35 per cent of the Ukrainians and 25 per cent of the Byelorussians. The remainder would have to be deported to western Siberia.

It was planned to remove the Czech intelligentsia not only from the areas marked for German settlement but from Europe in general, since their attitude to the Third Reich was hostile and they would be a threat to it even in Siberia. Apparently they were considered capable of organizing resistance to German rule. The best solution, thought the Plan's authors, would be to enable the Czech intelligentsia to emigrate overseas.

As for the Ukrainians, the original idea was to leave about one-third in the future German settlement area. Naturally, this group was to undergo gradual Germanization. The remaining two-thirds were to be deported to Siberia. A *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* was to be set up in the area not marked for German colonization. Later these ideas were revised, and the intention was rather to deport the Ukrainians not suitable for Germanization to the area of this *Reichskommissariat*. However, the details of these plans had not been finalized. The Byelorussians were to be treated similarly to the Ukrainians, with this difference that only about a quarter were to be Germanized and the rest deported to Siberia.

The plans for Poles and Russians were different. These two nations presented the Germans with greater difficulties. At first

glance this seems somewhat puzzling, since, in Wetzel's opinion, the Polish and Russian nations possessed many of the Nordic characteristics, proper to the German nation. It is only from his later remarks that it transpires that both the leading circles of the NSDAP and the Reich Security Main Office held the view that, though the Polish nation lent itself to Germanization as far as racial characteristics were concerned, political considerations made it necessary to abandon any plans for full-scale Germanization. This held out no hope of success because of the Poles' highly developed sense of patriotism, their hostile attitude to Germany and their natural bent for underground activity. The attribution of these qualities to the Poles and the conclusion, completely justified as it happens, that voluntary Germanization of even a fraction of the Poles was doomed to failure, goes a long way to explain the methods used against the Polish people from the very outset of the occupation, methods designed to wipe out the greatest possible number of Poles.

The provisions of the Plan were that 80-85 per cent of the Poles would have to be deported from the German settlement area — to regions in the East. This, according to German calculations, would involve about 20 million people. About 3-4 million — all of them peasants — suitable for Germanization as far as "racial values" were concerned — would be allowed to remain. They would be distributed among German majorities and Germanized within a single generation.

The 20 million Poles not suitable for Germanization presented greater difficulties. Obviously they would have to be expelled from their native land; but the problem was what to do with them. Wetzel stated in his comments that the Polish question could not be settled in the same way as the Jewish. In his opinion, this might discredit the German nation in the eyes of the world for years to come. It might seem strange that this anxiety about world public opinion was not felt concerning "the final solution of the Jewish problem." Presumably the Nazi leaders thought that the extermination of the Jews would



Civilian graves on Trzech Krzyży Square in Warsaw after the bombing of September 1939

Berlin, den 20. Juni 1940

Geheime Kommandosache

5 Ausfertigungen
1. AusfertigungAktenvermerk

Über die Besprechung im Hauptquartier des
Generalfeldmarschall Göring v. 19.6.40.

- 1.) Es ist der Wille des Führers, dass der Rüstungsschwerpunkt nunmehr auf die Luft zu legen ist. In zweiter Linie kommt dann die Kriegsmarine. Alle vorhandenen wirtschaftlichen Kräfte sollen in erster Linie zur schnellsten Stärkung der Luftrüstung eingesetzt werden.
- 2.) Die Rückführung der in den besetzten Gebieten vorgefundenen Rohstoffe ist mit Masserstem Nachdruck zu betreiben. Es soll ein besonderer Beauftragter für die Schrotterfassung eingesetzt werden. Gen.Lt. Thomas erläuterte kurz die bereits erfolgte Einsetzung des Rittmstr. Sohn in Holland und Belgien. Generalfeldmarschall Göring ist damit einverstanden, dass er auch die Schrotterfassung in Frankreich leiten soll. Sein Arbeitsgebiet soll sich nicht nur auf den Stahlschrott, sondern auch auf allen übrigen Schrott erstrecken.

Auf landwirtschaftlichen Gebiet steht im Vordergrund die Rückführung von Vieh aus Nordfrankreich und Belgien. Eine Fortnahme von Vieh bei den Flamen soll unterbleiben. Das RMH soll einen Sonderbeauftragten einsetzen für die Überwachung der Tätigkeit der Referenten für die Landwirtschaft bei der Militärverwaltung. Die Besatzungstruppen sollen weitgehend auf landwirtschaftlichen Gebiet eingesetzt werden.

- 3.) Eine besonders wichtige Aufgabe ist die Lösung des Verkehrsproblems in Deutschland. Generalfeldmarschall Göring beabsichtigt, demnächst einen Generalbevollmächtigten für das Verkehrswesen einzusetzen, sofern nicht das RVH in Kürze eine wesentliche Besserung der Verkehrslage zu erzielen vermag.
- 4.) Die Bestrebungen der deutschen Industrie, Betriebe in den besetzten Gebiet jetzt schon zu übernehmen, müssen scharfstens abgelehnt werden. Eine Einreise von Industriellen in das besetzte Gebiet darf vorläufig nicht zugelassen werden.

-3-

BDC - KTB vom 29.11-39 bis 31.3.41

- 5.) Bezüglich Holland soll eine vorsichtige Politik betrieben werden. Es ist beabsichtigt, Holland selbständig zu lassen, es jedoch ang an das Reich anzuschließen. Die Holländer sollen selbständig wirtschaften, jedoch soll der deutsche Einfluss auf wirtschaftlichen Gebiet mit allen Mitteln gestärkt werden. Nach Mitteilung von Minister Funk sind z. B. in Holland noch vorhanden:
- | |
|----------------------------|
| 300 Mill. Mark in Gold und |
| 200 " " " Devisen. |
- 6.) Allgemeine Absichten hinsichtlich der politischen Entwicklung:
Luxemburg soll ins Deutsche Reich einverleibt werden, Norwegen soll zu Deutschland kommen. Elsass-Lothringen wird ins Deutsche Reich wieder eingegliedert, es soll ein selbständiger bretonischer Staat errichtet werden. Es schweben weiterhin noch Absichten bezüglich Belgien, der besonderen Behandlung der Flamen dort, Errichtung eines burgundischen Staates.
- 7.) General Bührmann soll zum Hauptquartier des Generalfeldmarschalls treten als Inspekteur für Aufgaben des Vierjahresplans in den besetzten Gebieten.
- 8.) Der Generalquartiermeister soll den Auftrag erhalten, sich der Sicherung der Kunstwerte in den besetzten Gebieten besonders anzunehmen und für die Bewachung der staatlichen Werte Sorge zu tragen.
- 9.) Mineralöl: Aus der Tätigkeit der englischen Luftwaffe der letzten Tage ist erkennbar, dass durch verstärkte Angriffe auf die Mineralölverarbeitungs- und -Tanklager versucht wird, unsere Betriebsstoffversorgung entscheidend zu treffen. Es muss daher alles getan werden, um die Wirkung derartiger Angriffe so weit wie möglich abzuschwächen.
- Die Mineralölfabriken und Treibstofflager werden demnächst stärker mit Flakartillerie gesichert. Hierzu Heranrücken eines Teiles der Flaktruppe von der Front.
- Die Vorräte sind durch das RWM sofort weitgehendst zu dezentralisieren (Füllen der Tankstellen, der Wifo-Lager und der oestwärts der Elbe liegenden zivilen Lager).
- Es ist besonders dafür Sorge zu tragen, dass die Bestände bei den Treibstofffabriken auf einen möglichst niedrigen Stand gehalten werden. Bei den zivilen Tanklagern sind sofort verstärkte Sicherungsmaßnahmen durchzuführen.

Document: Photostat

Origin : Hqs of Field Marshal GOERING

Date : 20 June 1940

Summary :

Report on a discussion. According to HITLER'S will, air armament production will be increased. Raw materials from the occupied territories will be taken to Germany. Live stock will be taken away from Northern France and Belgium (not from the Flemish population). The traffic problem in Germany must be solved.

Efforts of German industrialists to take over the industry of the occupied territories is prohibited as yet. A cautious policy towards The Netherlands; they will be independent but under German economic influence. Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine and Norway will be incorporated into the Reich. An independent Bretagne will be established. The question of Belgium and of an independent Burgundy State is not decided as yet. The British Air Force tried to destroy our oil supplies. Measures to be taken to face this danger: decentralization of supplies, more flak protection, etc.

There are no names of American Nationals involved.

Source of document: Berlin Document Center.

Translation of paragraph 6, page 2.

General intentions concerning the political developments:

Luxembourg shall be incorporated into the German Reich, Norway shall go to Germany. Alsace-Lorraine will be reincorporated into Germany. It is intended to set up an independent Bretonic State. Intentions are still pending concerning Belgium, the special treatment of the Flemish element there, and the forming of a State of Burgundy.

PROCESSED BY:

DOCUMENTS UNIT
RECORDS SECTION
WAX CAMEL, BANCHE, USTET

DATE 10 Oct. 1945

SIGNATURE: H. B. A. Sueder

Summary of a conference held in Göring's Headquarters on June 20, 1940
prepared by the Prosecutor's Office of the American Military Tribunal

pass almost unnoticed in a world absorbed, as it then was, by a war effort on an unprecedented scale. In the Nazi plans, the final solution of the Jewish problem — that is the annihilation of European Jewry, was to be completed before the end of the war. The other argument used against mass extermination of the Poles was the fear that other nations in the East would feel themselves threatened by the same fate. There is, of course, no need to delude ourselves that humanitarian motives would have led the Nazis to shrink from mass annihilation of the Polish people or any other nation. If they rejected the methods tried out on the Jews, it was purely because of practical considerations — the fear that this threat to their existence might unite the Slav peoples in common opposition to Nazi rule. The Hitlerites reckoned that Germany, though master of vast areas after the triumphant conclusion of the war, would be considerably weakened in numbers.

The only solution, therefore, to the Polish question, according to *Generalplan Ost*, was the deportation of 80-85 per cent of the Poles to western Siberia. They were to be scattered over as wide an area as possible and intermixed with the local populace. The Germans were afraid that if the Poles were settled as a compact group they would in time Polonize the Siberians (*Sibiriakentum*) and a "Greater Poland" would evolve in that region. Fragmentation was to lead to an opposite development — assimilation and absorption by the local population.

As in the case of the Czechs, Wetzel recommended that the Polish intelligentsia be allowed to emigrate overseas; he considered that this social group with its great organizing talents and propensity for underground activity was a grave threat to the future Thousand-Year Reich.

Generalplan Ost devoted relatively little space to the Russian question, though in his memorandum Wetzel stressed that its proper solution was of great importance to Nazi policy in Eastern Europe. The Russian nation, he said, was a young one, hence biologically strong. Apart from this it possessed a considerable

admixture of Nordic blood; though this might raise the racial value of a particular nation in the eyes of theoreticians and politicians of this philosophy, it also made it a dangerous opponent. For this reason, in the Nazi thinking, the Russians, like the Poles, constituted a serious danger to the future great Reich.

Of course, there could be no question of "liquidating" the Russian nation. Apart from all considerations of a political and economic nature, this would have involved enormous technical problems, as Wetzel clearly emphasized. Other measures had to be sought to insure Germany against the danger threatening it from this area. For this purpose it was intended to split the whole territory of the Soviet Union — both in Europe and in Asia — into a number of administrative areas — *Generalkommissariats* — under German rule. In the demarcation of these areas, national factors would be taken into account with the aim of encouraging separatist tendencies. Essentially Russian territories, that is central Russia (*Reichskommissariat Russland*) would also be split up into *Generalkommissariats*, very loosely tied to each other. The object was to splinter as far as possible the national cohesion of the Russians. Wetzel stated that a situation should be aimed at in which a Russian from the Gorki *Generalkommissariat* would feel that he was different from a Russian in the Tula *Generalkommissariat*.^{*} The first task, then, was to break down the unity of the nations of the Soviet Union, and then to split the Russian nation from the inside. To make certain of this objective Wetzel considered imperative "a racial sifting of the Russians." By this phrase he meant the removal of the most valuable element "from a racial point of view" and their Germanization. This led him to imagine, in accordance with the theory of racism, that the Nordic elements in each nation determine its value and ability, and that the elimination of a few million "Nordic types" from among the Russian people would

^{*} *Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers SS p. 29.*

reduce it, from loss of "Nordic blood," to a lower racial category within a couple of generations. He thought that as a result of this process the Russians would become stupid and apathetic, lose all their initiative and readily accept the guiding role of the Germans.

Apart from these two methods of protecting the Nazi Reich against the Russian danger, *Generalplan Ost* also suggested the necessity of using another preventive measure — destruction or at least considerable reduction of the biological vitality of the Russian nation. This was a proposal that, in fact, concerned all the Slav peoples.

The object of this biological campaign was to curb the natural increase. Under the Nazi plan, a deliberate and calculated policy was to be conducted in the eastern part of Europe to cut down the natural increase by the double device of trying to reduce the birth rate and taking no steps to combat mortality.

Generalplan Ost, having distributed enormous areas of Eastern Europe as *Lebensraum* for the Germans, devoted a great deal of space to the methods to be used in ridding these areas of the people who had been living there for centuries. But very little — and that superficially — was said about how these areas were to be re-populated by Germans. This, of course, sprang from the difficulties involved in solving this problem not only in practice but even in theory.

It is simple to plan the expulsion of whole nations from their age-old territories and the deportation, over a longer or shorter period of time, of millions of men and women.

This was a lesson learned only too well by the Poles during the whirlwind deportations from western Poland after its incorporation into the Reich, or during the expulsion of the Polish population from the Zamość region. It is, however, much more difficult to fill depopulated areas, even in theory, with settlers who just do not exist.

Generalplan Ost stipulated, after Wetzel's revisions, that 50 million people, mainly Slavs, were to be deported from

Eastern Europe. Their place could be taken, over a period of 30 years — allowing for natural increase and immigration from other Germanic countries — at most by 10 million, though probably not more than 8 million, settlers. Dr. Wetzel realized the difficulties that would arise in the settlement of the eastern regions, but he consoled himself with the thought that a similar situation once faced North America. The use of this analogy suggests a further train of thought, admittedly not pursued by Wetzel, but which can hardly be ignored. The Americans were incapable of exploiting the vast territories they had acquired through extermination of the Indians and had to resort to Negro slave-labour. The Nazi scheme to detail manpower from among the native population to work on the farms of German settlers strongly recalls the buying of slaves by American farmers and plantation owners in the first half of the 19th century. This scheme did not talk about the "hiring" of farm labourers but expressly used the word "detailing," in other words, the willingness, or at the very least the wishes, of the people concerned was to be completely disregarded. In addition, the labourers assigned to each farm would have belonged to different nationalities unable to speak each other's language. It was supposed that this would force the labourers to use German, the only language that all of them would out of necessity know, and thus hasten the process by which they would lose their sense of nationality and even bring about their Germanization. It seems, however, that the main object was to hinder any opportunities for collusion which might lead to passive resistance or even organized revolt against the Germans.

This has been a very general description of the provisions contained in *Generalplan Ost*, and particularly in Wetzel's memorandum which, as was said before, was an elaboration of it. That this plan was to have been put into effect, and would have been, had Nazism triumphed, is shown by the fact that a number of its provisions were actually carried out, especially in Poland.

Plans for the Polish Nation

There can be no doubt that Nazi plans for Poland had been outlined long before the aggression of 1939, at a time when the Reich Government was still assuring Poland of its friendship and had signed a non-aggression pact. When *Generalplan Ost* was being drawn up, Poland was included in the "Little Plan" (*Kleine Planung*), which meant that part of the projects were to be carried out before the conclusion of the war.

Almost immediately after the conclusion of military operations in Poland, Hitler issued a decree on October 8, 1939* annexing the western part of Poland: the whole of Pomorze (Pomerania), the provinces of Poznań and Upper Silesia and parts of Łódź, Cracow, Warsaw and Białystok Provinces. These territories were to become an integral part of the Nazi Reich (the so-called New Reich) "for all time." Both in area and population they amounted to almost half the territory of the Polish state occupied by the Reich in 1939.

The remaining territory became the "Government General," a sort of reservation for the Poles under the absolute rule of Dr. Hans Frank, appointed by Hitler to the post of "Governor General of the Occupied Polish Territories."

Though the rulers of the Third Reich had wasted no time in partitioning and seizing the territories the Nazis had overrun,

* *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1939, p. 2,042.

they were still far from having finally solved the problem of *Lebensraum*. One obstacle was the Polish people living in this easily acquired area. They had to take into account the fact that these territories were inhabited by a nation of 29 million that possessed a thousand years' history, rich traditions and their own advanced culture. This nation could not just suddenly disappear from the face of the earth to suit the wishes of the Nazi Reich. This, however, was precisely what the Nazi plans called for: the Polish nation was to cease to exist just as in the minds of the rulers of the Reich the Polish state had ceased to exist. This is why the Nazis launched a merciless campaign against the Poles.

Though *Generalplan Ost* included plans for dealing with Poland in its first part, these were formulated only in general terms; the details had still to be filled in and concretized for practical application. Among the many confidential documents discovered in Nazi archives after the fall of the Reich, there were a number discussing in detail Nazi plans for Poland. It is worth giving the contents of some of them, even if only in general outline.

The lengthiest of these documents is a memorandum drawn up by the aforementioned Dr. Erich Wetzel and Dr. G. Hecht on the orders of the NSDAP Office for Questions of Racial Policy. It is dated November 25, 1939.* Like Wetzel's memorandum concerning *Generalplan Ost* it has all the appearance of a scholarly work, but it exposes in full all the charlatanism and preposterousness of the pseudo-scientific arguments used by the makers of racial policy. There is not the slightest attempt on their part to conceal the criminal immorality of these plans. Whatever modifications the directives contained in this memorandum underwent in the course of application, they were

* A photostat of this document is in the files of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland; it was published in Polish translation in vol. IV of the Commission's Bulletin in 1948.

nevertheless in principle the guiding line of Nazi policy in Poland throughout the occupation.

The memorandum contains 36 pages of typescript and is divided into three sections. A short introduction announces that section 1 deals with the structure of Poland from the national and racial point of view and gives a demographic description of the country. Section 2 discusses the problem of the Poles in the new territories of the Reich (annexed Polish territory) and the problem of colonization and resettlement. Finally section 3 covers special problems.

The first section begins with historical falsehood: "The Poles, an offshoot of the Western Slav group of nations, owe the birth of their nation and state to Germanic tribes. Hundreds, even thousands of years before the arrival of the Slav tribes, the major portion of the area of the Polish state was inhabited by Germans and other nations of the Nordic race." The authors further claim in their historical survey that it was not till several hundred years after these German tribes had withdrawn that the Western Slav tribes began slowly to assume the form of a nation. "This transformation into a nation the Poles owe to the Germans left in this area and the Norman overlords who had come here and formed the nobility. It is typical that the first ruler to unite the Polish tribes (about 960 A. D.) was the Norman Prince Dago. The Poles later called him Mieszko."

Wetzel and Hecht carefully omit to quote any historical sources for these claims. In any case, they were not concerned with truth. Some more or less believable justification had to be found in history for the "invincible right" of the Nazi Reich to Polish lands in the west. Although the memorandum makes it plain that the Slav tribes only began to form a nation several hundred years after the Germans had left and that this preceded the birth of the Polish state by further hundreds of years, the Nazi historians argued that the German nation, as the successor and heir of the ancient Germanic tribes, still possessed rights to the land occupied by them 1500 years ago.

This historical justification is followed by a discussion of the racial make-up of the Polish nation. It leads Wetzel and Hecht to the easily foreseeable conclusion that its racial features confirm the historical theory laboriously propounded at the beginning, since part of the population bears a clear admixture of Nordic blood.

The object of all these arguments is to justify in advance Nazi policy in the western territories seized from Poland, a policy formulated in the second section. "The object of German policy in the new Reich areas, must be the creation of a German populace homogeneous from the point of view of race, hence also from the viewpoint of mentality as well as national and political consciousness. From this it is clear that all the elements which do not lend themselves to Germanization must be removed unconditionally. This objective involves three related tasks:

"First, the total and final Germanization of those groups which seem suitable;

"Second, the expulsion of all foreign nationals not suitable for Germanization;

"Third, resettlement with Germans."

The plan of action, it can be seen, though laconic, was very explicit.

First place was given to the concept about the necessity of Germanizing part of the native population. However, this concept had to be reconciled somehow to the racist theory of purity of Germanic blood. The Germanization of Poles would contravene the principles of this theory. This was the point of the historical argument quoted above — to show that the ancestors of the inhabitants of these lands were Germanic. The authors stated flatly: "A German is someone who lives like a German in the sense of nationality, customs and family community, provided he is of German or related blood." It would be hard to imagine a more vague definition; the only tangible criterion, which could be used to determine a person's nationality — the language he uses in his home and with his family — has been

omitted. The criterion of Germanic extraction is equally vague; no clue is given to what is meant by "related" German blood. This vagueness was, of course, deliberate, since it left a very wide field of choice in selecting those people who either compulsorily or voluntarily were to be registered in these areas on the "German national list."

The racist principle of purity of blood was also upheld by removing the term "Germanization" (*Eindeutschung*) from the Nazi vocabulary and replacing it with "re-Germanization" (*Wiedereindeutschung*). As this item of the political programme went into effect, the German national lists began to contain, apart from a relatively small group of real Germans, the names of thousands of Poles in the annexed territories that were put there either compulsorily or under the threat of terror.

People unfit for Germanization were to be expelled. The memorandum stated that the territory of the "New Reich" contained about 5,363,000 Poles who would have to be eliminated by resettling them in the Government General. This was not, however, so simple. The deportation of such vast numbers would present enormous technical problems, above all, of transport. So it proved in practice during the "resettlement" carried out in the severe winter of 1939 which violated the most elementary humanitarian principles. It had to be taken into account, therefore, that deportations, particularly in wartime, would take a great deal of time — a few years at the least. It also had to be remembered that the Government General would be required to find room for over 5 million new inhabitants in a comparatively short period. Since it was unavoidable that there would be a great number of Poles still living in the annexed territories for a number of years, the memorandum provided for an intense system of discrimination against them. This was to cover all fields of political, social, economic and cultural life. The Poles would be unable to become citizens of the Reich or enjoy any political rights. They would be expropriated of all rural and urban property without compensation. They could not carry

on any independent trade; they could only work as hired labour for German employers. Their wages would be fixed at much lower scales than those of Germans.

All Polish schools and colleges would be closed down — universities, secondary, vocational and primary schools. Poles would not be allowed to attend German schools, except the very lowest grades.

All Polish periodicals and newspapers would be prohibited. It would be forbidden to publish any Polish books.

All Polish theatres and cinemas, restaurants and cafés would be closed. The Poles would be forbidden to go to German theatres or cinemas. They would also be forbidden to have radio sets or gramophones.

These bans even affected religious worship. Services in Polish were to be forbidden and Polish religious holidays abolished. The only holidays that could be observed were the Catholic and Evangelical ones recognized in the Reich. Catholic and Evangelical services could only be conducted by clergy with the proper political qualifications approved by the authorities. Marriage between Germans and Poles was to be forbidden.

Further on the memorandum contains the following:

“In order to destroy all forms of Polish cultural and economic life, there can be no Polish associations, unions or federations; church associations are also banned.”

The object of these discriminations was to deprive the Poles of all hope for the future, to crush in them all national consciousness and relegate them to the role of serfs or even slaves carrying out the lightest whim of the German “superman.”

The ultimate purpose of Nazi policy was to destroy the Polish nation on the whole of Polish soil whether that annexed by the Reich or that of the Government General. Eloquent proof of this is provided by the directives on the treatment of Poles in the Government General — *Restpolen*, as they were described in the third section of the memorandum.

Although discrimination in some fields of life, mainly economic, was not to go as far as in the annexed territories, the fundamental aim, according to the authors, was to be arrived at by a different road. The influx of refugees from the west would result in over-population and this, in turn would create economic misery and a drop in the natural increase. This was strongly desirable, since it was not in the interests of the Reich to uphold nationally, economically or culturally the populace of the Government General which was of no value to the Reich from a racial viewpoint.

The inhabitants of the Government General, continued the memorandum, should be given special national status, but they should not possess any independent political rights. The conditions created for the Poles should be such that it would become next to impossible for them to organize and expand any national liberation movement. For this reason there should be a ban on the formation not only of political organizations but also cultural associations — for instance singing groups, tourist clubs and especially sports and gymnastic associations. To raise the physical fitness and efficiency of the Poles was far from being in the German interest.

The authors then discussed the problem of how to treat the Jewish and Polish population; they saw two possible solutions. It is best to give them in their own words:

“One way is provided by the plan to keep both Poles and Jews alike at the same low level of living and deprive them of all political, national and cultural rights. In this case the Poles and Jews would be left in the same position.

“As for the second way, here the opportunities for the Poles to develop nationally and culturally would be no less restricted than under the first plan. The Jews, however, would be given slightly more freedom, particularly in the cultural and economic field, so that some decisions on administrative and economic matters would be taken in consultation with them. As far as domestic policy is concerned this solution would lead to still

greater economic encroachment by the Jews, but it would still leave the Jews grounds for serious complaints and with constant difficulties."

The mentality and ethical and moral standards of the theoreticians of National Socialism are vividly illustrated by this plan to create a situation which would inevitably lead to bitter hatred between Poles and Jews. Undoubtedly, the purpose was to turn the Polish and Jewish community, united in theory by their common servitude, one against the other by rousing in them the basest human instincts in the struggle for the miserable crumbs of an illusory freedom, or rather for the means of existence.

As is known, the Jewish problem was eventually solved in a completely different way. The Nazis came to the conclusion that total extinction of Jewry would be the most radical and indeed "final" solution.

The memorandum stressed that reduction of the birth rate in the Government General was desirable. In this connection abortion and sexual perversion should be tolerated. The health of the Poles, the sort of medical attention provided for them and the training of young doctors should be of no interest to the Germans. Their own medical service should confine itself merely to preventing the spread of infectious diseases from *Restpolen* to the Reich.

As in the case of the annexed territories, the plan called for lowering the level of education and culture. The reduction of theatres and cinemas was recommended; in those remaining open, the programmes offered should be of the lowest possible standard. The same was recommended for newspapers, journals and all forms of publications. There was to be a ban on the formation of educational and cultural associations, even singing groups, and of course sports and gymnastic clubs.

All institutions of higher education as well as secondary and vocational schools were to be closed. It is worth quoting the directives concerning the curriculum for primary schools.

"Only general primary schools are permitted and they will teach only the most rudimentary subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic. The teaching of such subjects as geography, history and history of literature, which are important from a national point of view, as well as physical training is forbidden. However, the schools should give training in agriculture, forestry and simple industrial trades and handicrafts."

After this any further evidence of the Nazi intent to deprive the Polish nation of its intelligentsia, considered dangerous because of their organizing abilities and natural leadership, seems supererogatory.

The memorandum contained some interesting advice on the selection of teachers. Wetzel and Hecht emphasized that the Polish teaching profession, particularly the schoolmistresses, were "prominent apostles of Polish chauvinism." By chauvinism they, of course, meant patriotism, and it is true that the Polish teacher has always been a promoter of patriotism, even in the darkest days of the partitions. The conclusion was drawn that professional Polish teachers, therefore, should in time be removed from all schools in the Government General as a harmful and dangerous influence. But another source of excellent teaching staff has been found: "It seems that it would suit our purposes if retired officers of the Polish police were later appointed as teachers in these primitive schools. In this way the establishment of teachers' training colleges would become unnecessary."

The purpose behind this undoubtedly visionary project is so obvious that it seems pointless to add any comment.

These, in a nutshell, were the directives of Nazi policy towards the Poles, based on apparently scholarly principles and contained in an official document. The document was neither secret nor even classified. Apparently the NSDAP and government leaders did not think it necessary to conceal their intentions.

Nazi plans were outlined with even greater cynicism in another document; its author was none other than Reichsführer

SS Heinrich Himmler, Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*). The six-page typescript was entitled "Some Comments on the Treatment of Foreign Nationals in the East." This document, dated May 5, 1940, was signed by Himmler himself and was highly confidential. * To it was added a note from Himmler that the contents had been shown to Hitler who had found them "very good and appropriate."

It is worth quoting a few excerpts from this work. It must be remembered that the term "East" was used by Himmler to mean the occupied Polish territories and "foreign nationals," the populace of this area, that is primarily Poles.

Himmler started by saying that they must recognize and uphold the existence of the greatest number of individual national groups in Polish regions, in other words, apart from the Poles and Jews also the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, *Górale* (highlanders), Lemki and Kashubians. "By this I mean that it is very much in our interest not only not to unite the people of the East but the reverse — to splinter them into as many parts and subdivisions as possible. We should also aim for a situation in which, after a longer period of time has passed, the concept of nationality disappears among the Ukrainians, *Górale* and Lemki. "The object was to fragmentize the Polish nation from the inside by the creation of previously non-existent nationalities such as the *Górale*, Lemki and Kassubians, and so make it easier to deprive it of its nationality afterwards.

Later in the "Comments" comes this passage:

"The basic question in the solution of all these problems is the question of schooling, hence the question of reviewing and sifting the youth.

"For the non-German population of the East there can be no

* *Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten*. Records of the trial of Joseph Bühler before the Supreme National Tribunal, vol. VI p. 65 ff.

type of school above the four-grade rudimentary school. The job of these schools should be confined to the teaching of counting (no higher than up to 500), the writing of one's name, and the teaching that God's commandment means obedience to the Germans, honesty, industry and politeness. Reading I do not consider essential."

It seems almost incredible that ideas of this sort could arise in the minds of men who in the middle of the 20th century occupied the highest positions in the government of one of the biggest and oldest states in Central Europe. Their object was to reduce Poles not so much to the status of slaves but rather soulless robots endowed with only the most primitive intelligence.

Further on Himmler wrote about children "valuable from the racial point of view," who should be taken from their parents and sent to Germany where they would be educated and Germanized. "Useless" children were to be left alone. This scheme is the best proof of the hypocrisy of the theory of racism; even the Nazi leaders could hardly have believed it if they had no qualms about introducing "valuable racial elements" into the German nation even if these elements descended in a direct line from the "defective" Slavs. True, they could always fall back on the mythical German or at least Norman ancestors from a thousand years back, "If these orders are carried out consistently," concluded Himmler, "the population of the Government General in ten years' time will be made up of the remaining useless populace, deportees from the eastern provinces and from all parts of the Reich, people belonging to the same racial and ethnic group (for instance, Serbians and Lusatians). This populace, deprived of its leaders, will be at the disposal (of Nazi Germany) as manpower and every year will provide seasonal labour for the Reich as well as labour for special jobs (road construction, quarrying, building); they will have better food and be able to live better than under Polish rule; at the same time, deprived of its culture under the strict, consistent and

just guidance of the German nation, they will be called on to help in the building of its enduring culture and monuments, and — as far as the tremendous amount of ordinary work done is concerned — perhaps even make them possible.”

Any scepticism about Himmler’s boast that his ideas met with the approval of Hitler is dispelled by a third document containing a pronouncement made by the Führer himself. This is a confidential note, dated October 2, 1940, drawn up in Berlin on the orders of Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, later chief of staff of the NSDAP and Hitler’s deputy.*

“On October 2, 1940,” it begins, “a conversation was started after lunch in the Führer’s apartment about the nature of the Government General, the treatment of the Poles and the inclusion of the Piotrków and Tomaszów areas in the “Warta Region” (*Warthegau*) that had been ordered by the Führer.” During this discussion the floor was taken by Baldur von Schirach, Hans Frank and Erich Koch. Finally Hitler spoke, taking a fundamental attitude to the problem in general. He said: “Under no circumstances should the Government General become a self-contained and uniform economic area producing all or some of the industrial articles needed by it; it must be a reservoir of manpower for us to perform the most menial jobs (brickmaking, road construction, etc.).

“It is therefore completely in order for a large surplus of manpower to exist in the Government General so that every year there would be a supply of labour for the Reich. We must be ruthlessly on our guard to prevent the emergence of any ‘Polish masters,’ wherever they are found, they must, however harsh this may sound, be eliminated.”

A little later Hitler made it clear what he meant by “Polish masters.”

“Once more the Führer must point out that the Poles can

* This document marked USSR-172, was included in the evidence submitted at the Nuremberg Trial against the principal war criminals

A b s c h r i f t
Geheime Reichssache !

214 geh. Rs.

Berlin, den 27. 4. 1942

S t e l l u n g n a h m e u n d G e d a n k e n
zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers SS.

Bereits im November 1941 wurde mir bekannt, daß das Reichssicherheitshauptamt an einer Generalplanung für den Osten arbeitete. Der zuständige Sachbearbeiter im Reichssicherheitshauptamt, Standartenführer Ehlich, nannte mir damals schon die im Plan erwähnte Ziffer von 31 Mill. auszusiedelnder fremdvölkischer. Vederführend ist in der Angelegenheit von den Dienststellen des Reichsführers SS das Reichssicherheitshauptamt, das offensichtlich heute die stärkste Position unter den einzelnen Dienststellen des Reichsführers SS hat. Dabei wird das Reichssicherheitshauptamt hier nach der jetzt von den Dienststellen des Reichsführers SS vertretenen Theorie offenbar auch als Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums tätig.

Memorandum zum Generalplan Ost.

In seiner Zielsetzung, nämlich der beabsichtigten Eindeutigung der in Betracht kommenden Ostgebiete ist der Plan zu billigen. Die gewaltigen Schwierigkeiten, die zweifellos bei der Durchführung des Planes auftauchen, die zum Teil sogar Zweifel an seiner Durchführung hervorrufen können, werden jedoch in dem Plan verhältnismäßig leicht genommen. Was das Siedlungsgebiet zunächst anging, so fällt auf, daß in dem Plan Ingermanland, der Dnjeprbogen, Taurien und die Krim als Siedlungsgebiete herausgenommen sind. Dies beruht offenbar darauf, daß in der Zwischenzeit diese neuen Siedlungsprojekte hinzugekommen zu sein scheinen. Über die am Schluß dieser Ausführungen noch gesprochen werden soll.

Auch sonst scheint heute als Siedlungsgrenze nach Osten, was den nördlichen und mittleren Teil der Ostgrenze betrifft, eine wohl mehr nach östlich gelegene Linie, die vom Ladoga-See-Ischardine bis Brjansk verläuft, genannt zu werden. Ob insofern

- 2 -

- handschriftliche Notizen -

Einige Gedanken über die
völkischen im Osten.

Bei der Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten müssen wir darauf sehen, so viel wie möglich einzelne Völkerschaften anzuerkennen und zu pflegen, also neben den Polen und Juden, die Ukrainer, die Weissrussen, die Goralen, die Leaken und die Maschuten. Wenn sonst noch irgendwo Völkessplitter zu finden sind, auch diese.

Ich will damit sagen, dass wir nicht nur das grösste Interesse daran haben, die Bevölkerung des Ostens nicht zu einen, sondern im Gegenteil in möglichst viele Teile und Splitter zu zergliedern.

Aber auch innerhalb der Völkerschaften selbst haben wir nicht das Interesse, diese zu Einheit und Grösse zu führen, ihnen vielleicht allmählich Nationalbewusstsein und nationale Kultur beizubringen, sondern sie in unzählige kleine Splitter und Partikel aufzulösen.

Die Angehörigen aller dieser Völkerschaften, insbesondere der kleinen, wollen wir selbstverständlich in den Stellen von Polizeibeamten und Bürgermeistern verwenden.

Spitzen in solchen Völkerschaften dürfen nur die Bürgermeister und die örtlichen Polizeibehörden sein; bei den Goralen die einzelnen, sich ohne-

Die Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements setzt sich dann zwangsläufig nach einer konsequenten Durchführung dieser Massnahmen im Laufe der nächsten 10 Jahre aus einer verbleibenden minderwertigen Bevölkerung, die noch durch abgeschobene Bevölkerung der Ostprovinzen sowie all' der Teile des deutschen Reiches, die dieselbe rassische und menschliche Art haben (Teile, z.B. der Sorben und Wenden), zusammen.

Diese Bevölkerung wird als führerloses Arbeitsvolk zur Verfügung stehen und Deutschland jährlich Wanderarbeiter und Arbeiter für besondere Arbeitsvorkommen (Strassen, Steinbrüche, Bauten) stellen; sie wird selbst dabei mehr zu essen und zu leben haben als unter der polnischen Herrschaft und bei eigener Kulturlosigkeit unter der strengen, konsequenten und gerechten Leitung des deutschen Volkes berufen sein, an dessen ewigen Kulturtaten und Bauwerken mitzuarbeiten und diese, was die Menge der großen Arbeit anlangt, vielleicht erst ermöglichen.

15.7.40.

A. A. Himmler



Notice forbidding Poles to enter the sports ground in Zywiec

Notice forbidding Poles to enter the park



only have one master, and that is the German; two masters cannot and must not exist side by side; therefore all representatives of the Polish intelligentsia should be eliminated (*umbringen*). This sounds harsh, but such are the laws of life.

"The Government General is a reservation for Poles, a huge Polish work camp. This is good for the Poles because we look after their health and make sure they do not die of hunger, etc. However, we must never allow them to climb to a higher level because then they would become anarchists and Communists."

These remarks by Hitler epitomize the directives issued by Himmler and the detailed project embodied in the memorandum of Wetzel and Hecht of November 1939. This programme was pursued with only minor variations throughout the occupation. The proof lies in the facts, and it is these facts that are presented in the following chapters.

Aggression and Border Incidents

The Nazi Reich wanted to absolve itself of all responsibility for the war which it started with the aggression on Poland in the early hours of September 1, 1939, and which, as it could have been foreseen and was in fact part of the Nazi plan, would gradually engulf the whole of Europe.

Neither Goebbels' propaganda machine nor the rulers of the Reich from Hitler down had any qualms about stooping to lies and slander in putting the whole blame and responsibility for the outbreak of war on Poland, even though the whole world realized that it was Germany which had attacked Poland without any provocation.

On September 1, Hitler informed the Reichstag that war had been declared on Poland.* His speech included this passage:

"Following the recent 21 border incidents in the course of a single night, today we have had 14 more, three of them very serious... Last night for the first time shots were fired by regular troops from the Polish side. Since 5.45 we have been returning their fire. Since then we have been answering shot for shot. If they use poison gas, they will have poison gas used against them. If they infringe the principles of humanitarian conduct of war, they can only expect us to take the same steps against them."

* *Auswärtiges Amt 1939 Nr. 2. Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges. Berlin 1939, p. 444.*

On the same day Hitler issued a call to the Wehrmacht in which he said:*

"The Polish state has rejected the peaceful settlement of relations between neighbours which I sought and instead has resorted to arms. Germans in Poland are being persecuted with bloody terror: they are being driven from their homes. A number of border violations, which cannot be tolerated by a great state, have shown that Poland has no intention of respecting the frontiers of the Reich. To put an end to these reckless outbursts there is nothing I can do except from now on answer violence with violence..."

In both these pronouncements Hitler referred to an alleged violation, on several occasions, of the German frontier as the justification for his aggression. At the end of 1939 the German Foreign Ministry (*Auswärtiges Amt*) published a White Paper containing 482 documents which were supposed to constitute unshakeable evidence that no blame attached to the Reich for the outbreak of war with Poland. The introduction was written by the Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop, who stated:

"The war which we are now fighting for the future of Germany was forced on us and makes it urgently necessary that we should always realize how it was that this war came about and where its ultimate causes lie. For all who have eyes to see, the facts have long been plain as the back of their hand, and they have been publicly disclosed by authoritative German spokesmen, above all the Führer. However, since the lying propaganda of our enemies has been busy trying to obscure the state of affairs and delude world opinion not only as to the causes of the war but also as to its objects, it is important once more to draw on authentic, official documents for indisputable proof that none other than England is to blame for the war, the object of which is the destruction of Germany."

* *Der grosse deutsche Feldzug gegen Polen. A. Franz Göth und Sohn, Vienna, 1940, p. 12*

It would be far outside the scope of this book to indulge in arguments with this White Paper or evaluate the documents in it. However, it must be stressed that one of them is marked No. 470 and concerns the frontier incidents allegedly provoked by Poland.

Not long after the White Paper was released, a publication appeared in Berlin entitled "100 Documents from the Period Preceding the War" (*100 Dokumente sur Vorgeschichte des Krieges*). These documents were taken from the White Paper, and included Document No. 470 which in this collection was marked No. 90 (470). Unlike the White Paper, this publication contained several postscripts to most of the documents. Document No. 90 had the following note:

"Thus, all possibilities of a peaceful settlement of the German-Polish crisis had been exhausted. As this document testifies, Poland had entered the road of violence and in this way had created a situation in which the German government was forced to counter violence with violence. It could no longer tolerate the Polish provocations, which in the last days and hours of the crisis had overstepped all bounds, and made peaceful regulation of relations impossible. In the early hours of September 1st the Wehrmacht was given orders to take counter-measures against the constant Polish raids on German territory. The speech made by the Führer on the morning of September 1st clarified the German attitude and justified to the world the German course of action."

As can be seen both the government and the Reich propaganda machine did their best to convince opinion in Germany and the world that the underlying cause and immediate occasion of the armed conflict between Poland and Germany were frontier incidents organized by the Poles. These provocations, the Nazis tried to suggest, had made it impossible to solve the differences between the two states by peaceful means.

Since the Reich rulers attached such great importance to these

"border incidents" it is worth examining precisely what they amounted to.

Document No. 470, or No. 90 (470), already referred to, was a compilation of reports on these frontier incidents and in both publications appeared under the lengthy title: "Collection of Reports Sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Serious Frontier Incidents on the Polish-German Frontier between August 25-31, Drawn up by an Official in the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

It listed altogether 44 incidents set out chronologically, day by day:

August 25	—	8 incidents
„ 26	—	4 „
„ 27	—	7 „
„ 28	—	5 „
„ 29	—	5 „
„ 30	—	4 „
„ 31	—	11 „

Each of these incidents was described briefly.

This document arouses certain doubts. It seems odd that the Reich authorities only began paying attention to frontier incidents on August 25, that is the very day on which an agreement was signed between Great Britain and Poland concerning mutual assistance if war broke out. It should be added that, according to Document No. 457 in the White Paper, on the same day Hitler, hoping to isolate Poland politically, had invited Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin and told him that the Poles had been responsible for 21 provocative incidents on the Polish-German frontier the preceding night. By some strange circumstance these incidents did not appear in the list in Document No. 470.

In his speech of September 1st Hitler claimed that the previous night there had been 14 incidents: the figure in the list was 11. These frequently public references to Polish provocations become particularly illuminating when taken in conjunction

with another document, the contents of which did not become known till after the war. This is a speech made by Hitler on August 22, 1939, at a meeting of his top leaders in his residence in Obersalzberg. "The only object of my pact with Poland," he said, "was to gain time... The present opportunity is the most favourable we have had... The attack on Poland and its destruction will begin on Saturday morning. I will have a few companies dressed in Polish uniforms organize a raid in Upper Silesia or the Protectorate. I am not concerned whether the world believes this. The world believes only in success..."*

From this and several other documents it is plain that it was not Poland but Germany which was looking for an armed conflict. Thus provocation of frontier incidents, which could be used as a *casus belli*, was in the interests not of Poland but of Germany, a fact frankly admitted by Hitler in this speech.

What are the true facts behind the frontier incidents?

After the war 210 documents of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) were found in Berlin concerning various provocative incidents. Among them was File NO 1026 describing the destruction of a railway watchman's house (No. 34) on the Ilawa-Rakowice line in Poland. By comparing this description with the list of incidents in the White Paper it is plain that this case is the same as incident No. 6 of August 25, 1939, mentioned in the White Paper.

Here is the note in the White Paper:

"6. Report from the State Police Station in Elbing (Elblag).

On the night of (August) 25-26 watchman's house No. 34 was blown up on the Eilau (Ilawa) — Smolniki-Działdowo line."

The first page of File NO 1026 records the following:

NO 1026
Kommando: 10
Building No. NO 26
North-East

1. Region

* Document L-003 of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal.

2. Type of Building:	German Reich Railways Watchman's house
3. Specification of building	See under 12
4. Detailed description of the site:	Railway watchman's house No. 34 on the Eilau-Rakowice (Poland) — Eilau line. About 100 metres from the frontier. Both sides of the line and the whole area are wooded
5. Brief description of the building:	Large house of a railway watchman. Unoccupied. Property of the German Railways. Because of its distance from the German railways, without a tenant.
6. Owner:	German Reich Railways; value about 6000 Rm.
7. Illustrations of the site:	Enclosed: 1 photograph, 1 sketch
8. Charge required	Probability coefficient
9. Insurance	
10. Tools and Equipment	
11. Time	
12. Remarks:	The destruction of this building should be treated as anti-German sabotage.

From this it is clear that though there were plans to blow up this building they were the plans not of Poles but of agents of the German Police. The note in the White Paper stated that the destruction of this building took place on the night of August 25-26 and that a bomb was used. In fact the building never was blown up and survived undamaged until 1945. It was not till 1952 that its dilapidated condition caused it to be

pulled down. There is an unimpeachable record of this in the Presidium of the Ilawa County People's Council dated April 1, 1953.

In the early days of the war Goebbels' propaganda made great fuss about two major frontier incidents, allegedly perpetrated by Poles on the night of August 31-September 1, 1939.

Document No. 470 in its listings for August 31 has the following entries:

4. Report of the Police President of Gleiwitz (Gliwice). At about 8 p.m. the radio station in Gleiwitz was attacked and temporarily occupied by a unit of Polish irregulars. They were driven out by German Frontier Police officers. During the clash one of the irregulars was fatally wounded.

5. Report of the President of Finance (*Oberfinanzpräsident*) in Opawa. On the night of August 31-September 1 the customs office in Hoflinden was attacked and temporarily occupied by Polish irregulars.* They were driven off after a counter-attack by a SS unit (*SS-Verfügungstruppe*)."

Both these incidents became court cases. The attack on the Gliwice Radio station was discussed at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. The attack in Hoflinden was the subject of a case before the District Court in Warsaw in 1949 — the trial of a war criminal, Józef Grzimka. The findings in both these cases revealed the truth of what took place on the Polish-German frontier a few hours before the outbreak of the war. The real facts about the Gliwice affair were disclosed in the sworn affidavit (Nov. 20, 1945) of Alfred Helmut Naujocks presented at Nuremberg by Colonel Storey of the American prosecution.

"I was a member of the SS from 1931 until October 19, 1944 and a member of the Security Service from its establishment in

* Both in this report and in the affidavits quoted later of Józef Grzimka and Hans Trummler the name of the place where the Poles were alleged to have raided the Customs Office has been misspelt. It should be in fact Hochlinden.

1934 until January 1941. I served in the Waffen SS from February 1941 until the middle of 1942. Later I was posted to the Economics Department of Military Headquarters in Belgium and served there from September 1942 to September 1944. I surrendered to the Allies on October 19, 1944. On or about August 10, 1939, the Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service, Heydrich, personally ordered me to simulate an attack on the radio station near Gleiwitz, near the Polish border, and to make it appear that the attacking force consisted of Poles. Heydrich said: 'Actual proof of these attacks by the Poles was needed for the foreign press as well as for German propaganda purposes.' I was directed to go to Gleiwitz with five or six Security Service men and wait there until I received a code word from Heydrich indicating that the attack should take place. My instructions were to seize the radio station and hold it long enough to let a Polish-speaking German, put at my disposal, make a speech in Polish over the radio. Heydrich told me that an appeal was to be made to the Poles calling on them to unite and crush the Germans because the hour of history had struck. He also said that he was expecting Germany to attack Poland in a few days. I went to Gleiwitz and waited a fortnight, after which I asked permission to return to Berlin but was told to stay on. Between August 25 and 31 I went to see Heinrich Müller, head of the Gestapo, who was then nearby at Oppeln (Opole). In my presence Müller discussed with a man named Mehlhorn plans for another border incident in which it should be made to appear that Polish soldiers were attacking German troops. Germans in the approximate strength of about a company were to be used. Müller stated that he had twelve or thirteen condemned criminals who were to be dressed in Polish uniforms and left dead on the ground at the scene of the incident to show that they had been killed while attacking. For this purpose they were to be given fatal injections by a doctor employed by Heydrich. They were then also to be given gunshot wounds. After the raid members of the press and other persons were to be

taken to the scene of the incident. Subsequently a police report was to be prepared. Müller told me that he had been ordered by Heydrich to hand over one of these condemned criminals for the Gleiwitz affair. The condemned men had been given the code-name of 'Canned Goods.'

"The incident at Gleiwitz in which I took part was carried out on the evening preceding the attack on Poland. As I recall, war broke out on September 1, 1939. At noon on August 31, I received by telephone from Heydrich the code word for the attack which was to take place at 8 p.m. that evening. Heydrich said: 'In order to carry out this attack, report to Müller for Canned Goods.' I did this and gave Müller instructions to deliver the man near the radio station. I received this man and had him laid in the entrance to the station. He was alive but he was completely unconscious. I tried to open his eyes. I could not recognize by his eyes that he was alive, only by his breathing. I did not see the shot wounds, but a lot of blood was smeared across his face. He was in civilian clothes.

"We seized the radio station as ordered, broadcast a speech of 3-4 minutes, fired some pistol shots and left."

Here is the sworn affidavit of Józef Grzimka on January 27, 1949, during his trial before the District Court in Warsaw:

"On August 15, 1949, I was summoned by telegram on Himmler's orders and had to report to his office. The telegram said I had been called up to strengthen the police reserves. In Himmler's office in Berlin I found a great number of people who came from Upper Silesia. All of us belonged to the *Allgemeine* SS. From Berlin we were taken to the SS school in Bernau. We were not allowed to leave the building, write letters, or communicate with the outside world. We were told that we had been called up to reinforce the frontier police on the Polish border. In the school we underwent the same training as in the infantry. One day we were ordered to sign a paper saying that everything we learnt would be kept secret and that betrayal

of it would be punished by the death not only of the traitor but also of his whole family up to the third line of relationship.

"On or about August 18 some high official from the German Foreign Ministry arrived together with several military men and civilians. They examined us to see if we knew Polish, ordered us to sing Polish songs and translate from German into Polish. I knew a little Polish, my comrades much more. The next day we were dressed in Polish uniforms, some of us being given the green tunics that Polish youth wore. We had to return the uniforms immediately after the fitting. On August 21st we were loaded into closed lorries and taken to Sławęczyce near the Polish border. We remained there till August 23. On the evening of the same day we were taken to the border itself between Bytom and Gliwice. We were wearing Polish uniforms over which we had been told to put German uniforms with the insignia removed. When we were already in the woods on the border the civilians whom we had seen in Bernau arrived and conferred. We could not hear what they were saying; we only caught the word 'treachery.' A few minutes later we were taken back to Sławęczyce where we remained in closed barracks until August 31. On the evening of this day we were again told to put on our Polish uniforms with German uniforms over them and taken by lorry to the border, to the town of Hohenlinden*, between Bytom and Gliwice. We remained in the woods until dusk when we were led out into the fields. In the field Oberführer SS Trummler, who was our commanding officer, gave the order: 'Speak only in Polish, take off your German uniforms, sing Polish songs, curse the Germans in Polish and fire in the air.' I am repeating his words exactly. Then Trummler ordered us to move in the direction of the customs post in Hohenlinden and enter it. In the post there was only the *Kompanieführer* whom we knew from Bernau but no officials. Trummler ordered us to demolish all the installations of the building, smash the

* See footnote on p. 40.

windows, break up the furniture, etc. We carried out this order. Then we were told to re-assemble in the field from which we had started and on the way fire shots in the air. In front of the customs post we saw a few bodies in Polish uniforms. I touched one — he was absolutely stiff. Everyone answered at roll call which meant that the bodies in Polish uniforms had not belonged to our group. I learned later that the bodies had been brought by some unknown persons by lorry. We were taken back to Sławęczyce where our uniforms were taken away and were again ordered to sign a pledge of secrecy. The attack on Hohenlinden was commanded by SS Sturmbannführer Trummler...

"During the raid there was absolute quiet on the Polish side. I did not realize I was taking part in a provocation until the German radio announced that the Poles had destroyed a customs post in Hohenlinden and the radio station in Gliwice, and that the Reich was as a result declaring war on Poland..."

Grzimka's story of the incident in Hohenlinden is backed up by the evidence of Dr. Hans Trummler which he gave under oath in Dachau on January 13, 1947, to Stefan Jaśkiewicz and Marian Węclewicz representing the Polish Military Mission for the Investigation of War Crimes:

"At the beginning of August 1939 I was posted for service in Hohenlinden with other senior SS officers. This planned action was regarded as a 'State secret.' All of us, Führer, Unterführer or private, had twice to sign a pledge before we started the action, that we would keep it secret under penalty of death and the expulsion of our whole families. More detailed briefing on the Hohenlinden affair was given me by Müller or his staff officers.

"The orders I received went more or less as follows:

"In the area of Hohenlinden-Pless various raids had been carried out by Polish customs officers or irregulars on German territory. As a result the German police had been reinforced. A raid should be carried out on the customs post south of Hohenlinden which should be made to look the work of Polish

customs officers or irregulars. The German customs officers would repel this attack and capture some Polish customs officers (fitted out with uniforms by us). Further preparations along these lines were being made in the fencing school in Bernau. For this purpose, from among the *Allgemeine* SS members in Upper Silesia, one man speaking Polish fluently had been taken from each town allegedly to reinforce the police and ordered to report to the school in Bernau. The object of the order was in no case made known to the SS men. These SS men had to sign the pledge I have already mentioned and from then on were considered as 'bound by secrecy.'

"In my opinion, this order, which might have led to special incidents, must have been issued by high or even the highest officials. Since frontier relations were involved it must be presumed that the Foreign Ministry had been informed of these matters.

"About August 20, 1939, my unit was transferred to Slawęczyce. The job was to be carried out on August 23. However, action was postponed to a later date — perhaps for political or military reasons. Because of the necessity for secrecy my men were specially watched.

"The job was carried out on the night of August 31-September 1. There was no direct clash with Polish troops or civilians. At the scene I passed on an order drawn up in Berlin by the RSHA. This was its contents:

'1. From the start only Polish is to be spoken. On the left of the road leading to the Polish frontier you must make a noise and be visible. Anti-German songs and the Polish national anthem is to be sung. Then you are to curse the Germans in Polish and shout things like "Long live Poland," "Down with Germany." While you are doing this you are to keep firing into the air.

'2. When you reach the German customs post, which lies on the left of the road, you are to destroy it completely and take away the books. The German clerks found outside the customs

post are to have been shot by Poles. In the post itself there will be one civilian whom you are to leave alone.

"During this whole affair, I was at first on the road out of Hohenlinden, and later I went to the customs office. When I went inside, the main points of the order had been carried out. A number of bodies in Polish uniforms were lying around. I did not know anything about how they had been brought there. They were loaded onto a lorry and taken away. On our way back to Sławęczyce we saw German troops moving forward. The entire operation was directed by Generalleutnant Müller, head of Section IV of the RSHA (Gestapo), together with certain other members of his department dressed in civilian clothes. Müller made a personal report in Berlin on the carrying out of this order...

"Generalleutnant Müller and the other commanding officers involved in this action later received military decorations...

"I would like to add that while I was in Hohenlinden and carrying out my orders, that is from August 25 to September 1, there were no raids on German territory by Polish officials, troops or police."

So much for the border incidents which, according to the leaders of the Reich, had been committed by Poland and were supposed to be the immediate occasion of the German attack in 1939. There can be no disputing the facts in this sworn evidence: they were to be the first link in the chain of crimes that was to follow.

Crimes Against Polish Troops

Modern warfare has long ceased to bear any resemblance to any kind of single combat. It is highly mechanized and the human element is confined to the control of death-dealing machinery. There is a great deal of space separating the belligerents; often they cannot even see each other. Thus the enemy is not only the soldier on the other side but every living being on the territory to be captured and against which the attack is directed. In these conditions war has become depersonalized. It is now a gigantic machinery of destruction set in motion by an invisible hand. Perhaps it is this depersonalization that has led to the disappearance of humanity in modern wars, even though the rules and customs of international law on the conduct of war are in principle still binding. In these circumstances it is obvious that modern warfare had no room for the old chivalrous attitudes. Even so, as soon as one of the sides abandons the fight and lays down its arms in surrender, the impersonal nature of the fighting disappears. The machines stop and human beings take their place. It is then that there is not only an opportunity but even a duty for at least a human, if not chivalrous, handling of the defeated enemy.

Having said this, it is worth examining how the Wehrmacht treated the defeated Polish troops during the 1939 campaign.

Nazi propaganda, which at the end of 1939 and beginning of 1940 did all it could to justify the aggression in its accounts of

the fighting in Poland specially emphasized that the Reich had tried to carry on the war in a most humanitarian fashion. To back up these claims, one of the propaganda publications of the period* quoted some instruction to the fighting troops which, it maintained, had been issued to every German soldier on specially printed sheets. This was confirmed by Field Marshal Milch in his testimony at Nuremberg.** These instructions were a digest of the basic principles of war, as recognized by international law and practice, in relation to an enemy that has surrendered and the population and property of a defeated country. They included the following rules:

"The German soldier will fight in a chivalrous spirit for the victory of his country. Cruelty and needless destruction impair his honour.

"It is forbidden to kill either a soldier who has surrendered or a partisan or a spy. They are to suffer a just sentence passed by a court of law.

"It is forbidden to maltreat or abuse a prisoner of war.

"The Red Cross is inviolable. The wounded are to be treated considerably."

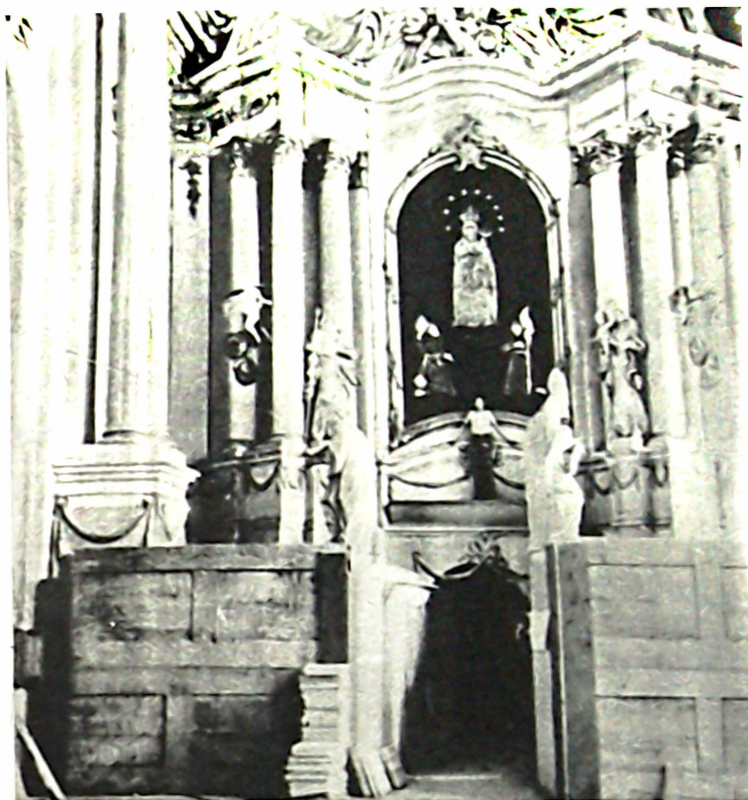
Were these instructions followed as far as Polish soldiers were concerned? Seemingly, yes. Everyone knows that thousands of Polish soldiers and officers were taken prisoner, sent to Germany and, in accordance with international conventions, placed in prisoner-of-war camps. It must also be admitted that their treatment in these camps on the whole was correct.*** Their fate was idyllic compared to the tragedy of the victims of the concentration camps. But it is precisely this difference that

* *18 Tage Weltgeschehen — Der Feldzug gegen Polen*, Dr. E. R. Understadt. Berlin, 1940.

** The Nuremberg Trial, Vol. IX, pp. 100—101.

*** The murder of the British R.A.F. officers who escaped from Sagan P.O.W. camp and of the Polish officers who escaped from the Dössel camp and almost all of whom were recaptured on Reich territory are among the few exceptions.

Interior of a church
converted into a store-
house



Profanation of a church
in the Poznań area





Desecration of a wayside shrine

On the back of this photograph is the German caption: 300 polnische Soldaten die im Wald vor Zwolen (Ciepielów) den Vormarsch einer mot. Inf. Einheit (III./I.R.15 mot.) aufhielten werden abgeführt und sofort erschossen. (300 Polish soldiers who had held up the advance of a motorized infantry unit (III./I.R.15 mot.) in the woods near Zwolen (Ciepielów) are led away to be shot at once)





On the back the German caption: 2 Nachzügler vor Oberst Wessel. Einer der poln. Soldaten erzählt beschwörend dass er nur seine 4 Kinder schützen wollte. Der Monokel Oberst gibt mit einer Daumenbewegung Befehl zum erschliessen. (Two stragglers before Colonel Wessel. One of the Polish soldiers pleads that he only wanted to protect his four children. The monocled colonel gives a sign with his thumb to shoot them)



Polish soldiers shot in the woods near Ciepielów

gives weight to the belief that it was not feelings of humanity, still less chivalry, that were the motives behind the more or less decent treatment of prisoners of war. It was simply that the Nazis could not violate the principles of international law in too glaring or wholesale a manner, especially since the war was still on and they had to remember that German soldiers might also find themselves in the hands of the enemy. But it was different in cases where they could safely break these rules. Then the Wehrmacht succeeded in completely forgetting these noble-sounding instructions.

Proof of this are the incidents of torture and butchery of Polish soldiers in 1939, especially just before the completion of military operations.

The findings of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland * show that atrocities of this kind were committed by units of the Wehrmacht throughout Poland and almost always on the orders of an officer. The number of these crimes, the impunity with which they were committed, and the lack of any steps on the part of the army command to prevent similar occurrences are proof enough that they were not merely the sporadic, irresponsible outbursts of individual commanders but part of a routine approved, if not deliberately organized, by the Nazi authorities of violation of international law and practice, designed to eliminate the greatest possible number of Poles.

These crimes have been testified to by many hundreds of witnesses, many of whom were intended victims and escaped only by accident. A few extracts from their testimony will serve as both examples and evidence of these atrocities.

First there is the story of Jan Marek of Łodygowice, county

* This investigation was undertaken in 1949 in connection with the proceedings by the British authorities against Nazi generals Rundstedt, Manstein and Strauss. All three served in the 1939 Polish campaign. The British prosecutor, Mr. Elwyn Jones, was specially sent to Poland to take part in the investigation.

of Żywiec, as told in court on June 17, 1949.* An infantryman in the 4th Podhale Rifle Corps, he had been taken prisoner in the vicinity of Przemyśl. Together with more than a hundred other prisoners he was marched off in the direction of Droho-bycz. On the way the escort of German soldiers ordered a halt in the village of Urycz. They were locked into a barn where they were told they would spend the night.

After the doors were bolted Marek, who with some of the others was in the loft, through a crack in the roof saw the German soldiers on the orders of the officer in charge take two cans of petrol from a car and pour their contents over the walls of the barn. As soon as they had done this they opened fire on the barn and threw some grenades. The building immediately went up in flames. The prisoners, trying to escape, tore out a board from one of the walls but, once outside, ran into the bullets and grenades. Marek managed to jump over a fence into a field but was hit in the shoulder and fell. He forced himself up but had hardly gone a few paces before a grenade was thrown at him. He was again wounded, this time in the face. He fell and lost consciousness. This saved him. The Germans must have presumed that he was dead. During the night he was found at the scene of the massacre by the village bailiff and the following day taken by cart to the hospital in Schodnice. To this day Marek's face is disfigured.

His evidence is corroborated by that of Antoni Dobija from Godziszka, county of Biała Krakowska, another of the very few Poles who by pure chance survived the Urycz massacre, in which about 100 prisoners of war were either burnt to death or killed by bullets and grenades. Neither Marek nor Dobija knew or could even imagine a reason for this mass execution.

However, it did at times happen that some pretext was sought to justify the slaughter of Polish prisoners. One such case was

* Records concerning Manstein and others in the files of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

described in court by Tadeusz Nowak and Józef Nycz of Cracow who served in the 20th Infantry Corps.* They testified that after the final routing of the corps near Tomaszów in the Lublin area they had been taken prisoner on the morning of September 20, near the village of Wielki Majdan. They were put in a group of over 40 prisoners. All of them were unarmed. They were drawn up near a barn on the outskirts of the village. Suddenly the Germans began to beat the soldiers in the front rank with rifle butts shouting something in German which the Poles did not understand. After a while an officer approached; he held a revolver in his hand and shouted an order. The prisoners' first thought was that he was ordering his men to stop; after a minute they understood that he was accusing the Poles of having killed a German soldier, whose corpse had been found near the barn, and that he was ordering his men to shoot them. The Germans moved back and opened fire. Nowak was unhit but fell to the ground. On top of him fell two of his wounded comrades, one of them praying aloud. One of the Germans must have heard this, because Nowak heard a cry of *Der lebt noch* just above his head, followed by a shot. The prayer was cut off. Nowak could hear the wounded being finished off. After a certain time when the Germans had left, Nowak hid in the barn. When it grew dark he slipped in amongst a group of prisoners being marched down the road.

The evidence of the other witness to survive this massacre, Józef Nycz, agrees with that of Nowak.

The bodies of the victims were buried on the spot. In April 1940 they were exhumed on the initiative of the Polish Red Cross to be taken to a cemetery. The mass grave contained the corpses of 42 Polish soldiers.

From the evidence given by the inhabitants of the village it appears that on the night of September 19–20 a German patrol had encountered withdrawing Polish units. The German soldier,

* Ibid.

whose body was found near the barn, probably died in this encounter. In reprisal for his death, the Wehrmacht murdered over forty unarmed Polish soldiers who had probably not even been involved in the previous night's engagement.

Sometimes prisoners were shot merely because the officer in command of a unit which captured them did not want to waste time taking them to an assembly point. This was particularly so when there was only a single prisoner or a small group.

Stanisław Gozdur, a village leader from Lipsko in Warsaw Province, was an eye-witness of such an execution.* On the morning of September 8, 1939, Gozdur went into his garden and saw a group of fourteen unarmed Polish soldiers on the road about a 100 yards away. The Poles were kneeling by the side of the road; on the other side was a small detachment of Germans with their rifles aimed at the Poles. Beside them an officer was loudly cursing the Poles, yelling that he did not know what to do with them because he certainly did not intend to cross the Vistula with them. The witness who understood German fluently could hear the officer's every word in the quiet of the early morning. The order was given to shoot the prisoners, immediately followed by a burst of rifle-fire. Shortly afterwards the Germans marched off. All but one of the Poles were dead. After being given medical care for a few days by the local inhabitants, he made his way to his native Kielce.

A much bigger massacre of Polish Prisoners was carried out in the transit camp at Zambrów on the night of September 13-14. The evidence in this case has come from several eye-witnesses among the prisoners and from some of the local inhabitants*.

This temporary camp had been set up on the parade-ground of former barracks. Over 4,000 prisoners had been placed there surrounded by a cordon of guards. During the night the square was encircled by lorries with their headlights on. On the other

* Ibid.

side of the cordon were some battered old railway wagons in which the horses had been placed. In the evening the prisoners were ordered to lie down and threatened that anyone who tried to get up would be shot. During the night the horses in the dilapidated cars panicked presumably by the glare of the headlights, broke through the cordon into the camp trampling the Poles on the ground. The prisoners jumped up to get out of the way of the horses. During the pandemonium the guards opened fire from machine-guns mounted on the lorries. This led to still greater confusion and uproar. When the firing stopped, the prisoners were forbidden to move. Until dawn the square was loud with the groans of the dying and wounded. In the morning those who could walk were marched off in the direction of Łomża. The bodies of the rest were buried in a pit dug on the square. None of the witnesses can say exactly how many were killed but put the number approximately at 200.

The incidents described are far from being the only crimes committed by the Wehrmacht on Polish prisoners of war in 1939. The number disclosed during investigations is far higher. There can be no doubt either that there are many other such cases which have never and will never come to light. These involved primarily single prisoners or small groups, especially if the murders were committed far from human habitation.

Further indisputable evidence of these atrocities is contained in authentic photographs, found in the possession of captured German soldiers or among their abandoned kit. These pictures, taken as "souvenirs" — a widespread habit among the troops of the Nazi armies — usually contain no clue as to place, date or victims. This, in fact, makes them even more eloquent and convincing as evidence.

As far as numbers are concerned the worst atrocity was that committed near the village of Ciepielów, county of Ilża, when 300 prisoners were slaughtered. This crime was uncovered during an investigation conducted on the spot but it was

impossible to establish the details. The execution was carried out in the woods far from the village. The villagers knew about it but there were no eye-witnesses. The denouement was found in the least expected of quarters. In August 1950 the then existing Polish Consulate in Munich sent on to the Polish Military Mission for the Investigation of War Crimes in Berlin an anonymous package containing two typewritten pages in German, undated and unsigned, and five photographs. It is best to quote this document in full:

"OUR FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN POLAND."

"Recent events do not seem to bode any good. The day before yesterday our senior sergeant riding in a slow-moving car shot with his 'eight' (an 8 calibre revolver) a 60- or 70-year-old peasant who was trying to lead his cow to the barn presumably to stop it from wandering around the road. He was very proud of this feat of marksmanship performed, it must be remembered, at a distance of nearly 40 feet from a moving car. I simply cannot understand this. It is only a few weeks since he got married and was so full of gentle affection for his wife and considerable with his in-laws. Perhaps he only wanted to hit the cow? Unfortunately pride stopped him from keeping the feat of marksmanship quiet, so that cannot be the explanation. Besides, as an experienced senior sergeant who wants to become an officer, he would not during the advance risk shooting a cow which could not then be handed over for the army's needs. Would not this be stealing 'army property?' Since the column halted just after the shot, we were able to see a grizzled old woman throw herself weeping on the corpse. Presumably our "hero" would have shot the old woman too had the car not stopped just then, which would naturally have detracted from his 'shooting reputation.'

"Up to that day we had still not taken part in any fighting. Only on the left and right sides of the road could be seen wounded Polish soldiers trailing back in single file with their hands above their heads. Senior Rifleman K. shot one of these

wounded soldiers from a moving lorry simply because he had raised only one hand. It could be seen quite plainly that the soldier's right arm was hanging helplessly, since his whole arm had been crushed. Senior Rifleman K. did this out of pure shooting fever. I saw him aim his rifle and called out disgustedly 'Oberjäger!' He lowered the rifle. Ten seconds later just as I had turned my head back I heard a shot. The Pole fell. K. could not, however, deny that it was his shot. How do I explain this? These were the heroic exploits of our company before even a single shot had been fired in our direction.

"Then in the woods around Ciepielów, not far from Zwolen, the 11th company of our battalion found itself in the front of the column. We were just behind them. I heard the firing of machine-guns. The troops in front were under fire. Out! I was filled with some sort of panic. I did not even want to be brave — that's no good — if I did not know why. Confusion, orders; single file, the 10th company on the left of the road. I followed the others. I felt in danger, now I might be killed as punishment for my illogical thinking and this removed all feelings of fear. I took cover with all the others but I could not see any Poles. A rifleman with a machine-gun was blazing away furiously. There was the hum of ricochets. Now I realized that the Poles were also shooting. Soon there was a whistle just by my right ear. Then Captain Lewinsky fell — the first. Shot in the top of the head. So there were men in the trees. I admired the courage of these snipers in the trees. One of them was detected. The medical orderly shot him with his pistol. Suddenly we broke ranks. Everyone started running through the wood like madmen. An hour later, we all assembled in the road. The company had 14 dead including Captain Lewinsky. The commander of the regiment, Colonel Wessel (from Kassel) with a monocle in his eye was fuming. What nerve! Trying to hold us up and shooting my Lewinsky. It did not matter to him that these were soldiers. He claimed that he was dealing with partisans even though each of the 300 Polish prisoners was in uniform. They

were forced to take off their tunics. Yes, now they looked more like partisans. Then their braces were cut, apparently to prevent them from running away.

"Next the prisoners were forced to march down the road in single file. Where were they being taken?

"Back to the wagons which would shortly take them to the prisoners' collection point?

"Five minutes later, I heard the crash of a dozen German machine-guns. I ran towards them and a hundred yards back I saw the 300 Polish prisoners shot and lying in the ditch by the side of the road. I risked taking two photographs and then one of the motorized riflemen, who had carried out this exploit on Colonel Wessel's orders, placed himself proudly in front of my camera."

Here the typewritten account, which seems to be an extract from a diary, breaks off. The enclosed photographs are undoubtedly the work of the author. On the back of each can be made out a somewhat faded explanation in pencil.

There can be no doubts as to the truth of the events described by the unknown writer; in any case the photographs back up his description. The secret of the crime committed years ago by the Wehrmacht in the woods near Ciepielów had at last been revealed.

Nazi Camps in Poland

At the beginning of 1933, almost as soon as Hitler came to power, the first concentration camps were set up in Germany. In time a whole complex system of camps grew from them and during the war reached mammoth dimensions. Within the Reich and the occupied countries there were about a thousand of them, excluding the P.O.W. camps (*Stalag and Oflag*).

The first camps were the brain child of Hermann Göring. In 1933 he was Premier of Prussia and also head of the State Secret Police (*Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt*) which he had established. The camps set up on his orders had as their object the elimination of political opponents of the Nazi regime. The majority of the prisoners behind their barbed wire were, therefore, Communists, true democrats and other real or suspected enemies of the Nazis. The example of Prussia was soon followed by other parts of the Reich, led by Bavaria, where in April 1933 the later notorious Dachau camp was set up. It was to become the prototype of all the future concentration camps.

In 1936 Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer of the SS, was appointed Chief of the State Police for all Germany. This was a very important event in the development of the concentration camp system. In the hands of Himmler, as Chief of German Police and head of the SS — that is, a party organization outside the police and already numbering several hundred thousand members, was gathered control over a huge apparatus

whose job was to protect Nazi rule against all "enemies of the state" within the Reich. This personal concentration of power was followed by a rapid penetration of the SS into the police. SS members joined the police and police officials with the right "qualifications" were inducted into the SS. Soon the concentration camps came under the sole control of the SS and became an instrument of unprecedented police terror. A far-flung network of agents and informers of the State Secret Police, or Gestapo, which had grown out of the embryonic body founded by Göring in 1933, was constantly on the lookout for new "enemies of the state," who would then be sent to the concentration camps by the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA, one of 12 Main Offices at SS headquarters).

By now the camps were not confined only to "political offenders;" other "undesirables" found their way there; habitual criminals, "asocial elements" such as prostitutes, beggars and vagrants without regular jobs, homosexuals, members of the religious sect of Bible Students, etc. But the overwhelming majority were still the political prisoners.

Despite the rigorous regime, the heavy work, the bad treatment, the punishments, and the physical and moral terror, the camps at this time were still in principle only places of isolation, designed to cut the inmates off from the rest of the community but not for their extermination. With the outbreak of war, however, the function of the camps in Germany radically changed. The camps set up in the occupied areas, particularly in Poland, had functions that went far beyond those of the pre-war Nazi camps.

One of the objects of the armed drive of the Reich to the East was, as everyone knows, the acquisition of *Lebensraum*. These areas were to be unoccupied, cleared of their former inhabitants. Obviously the simplest way of achieving this was direct physical extermination. There are quite explicit references to this in a speech made by Hitler on August 22, 1939, at

his residence in Obersaltzberg during a meeting of top Wehrmacht officers:

"Our strength lies in our speed and our ruthlessness. Genghis Khan caused the death of millions of women and children deliberately and without any qualms. But history sees him only as a great founder of a state. I do not care what the helpless civilization of Western Europe thinks about me. I have issued orders to shoot anyone who dares utter even one word of criticism of the principle that the object of war is, not to reach some given line, but physically to destroy the enemy. That is why I have prepared, for the moment only in the East, my 'Death's Head' formations with orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need..."*

These directives found their systematic expression in the methods of war used against the Poles. The bombing of open cities and towns, burning of villages and even tiny hamlets, the strafing of helpless civilians, the mass executions of captured Polish prisoners, the slaughter on the slightest pretext, or none at all, of peaceful and unarmed men and women cost the Polish nation many thousands of lives. But the physical destruction of a nation of many millions during a few weeks' fighting was impossible, even using the most barbaric methods of total war. So the Nazis, with their sights firmly on their target, from the first days of the occupation began a merciless and systematic campaign of biological destruction of the Poles. The whole of Nazi policy in Poland was geared to these objectives: in theory — as can be seen from official documents, in the form of plans, memorandums, directives and comments — and in practice, as is shown by what actually happened.

The difference between the occupation in Poland and in the countries of Western Europe is that in the latter the Nazis

* Document L—003 of the I.M.T.

sought to crush only their active or suspectedly active opponents. In Poland, however, every man, woman and even child was regarded as an enemy merely, or rather precisely, because they were Poles.

One of the means used to reach the targets set by Nazi policy with regard to the Poles were the concentration camps. Before the war, the camps in the Reich had been an instrument of political terror. In Poland they were to become an instrument of extermination of hundreds of thousands of Poles as well as a medium of slave labour. These two functions, though seemingly contradictory, could be combined very efficiently. The driving of the prisoners to the extreme limits of their strength, together with the appalling conditions in which they lived and the monstrously barbaric treatment which they suffered, inevitably led to their complete physical and psychological exhaustion and so to their "natural" death. These were functions fulfilled by all the Nazi concentration camps during the war both in Germany and the occupied countries. But while in Western Europe it was only those who were active opponents of the Nazi regime, or suspected as such, that were sent to the camps, in Poland everyone was a candidate because he belonged to a nation on whom sentence had been passed.

The basic job of the concentration camp was to drive the prisoners to a "natural" death after first having exploited them as slave labour. This does not alter the fact that a certain number died "unnaturally" by execution or were murdered during the so-called "selection parades" because they were of no further use as labour material.

The death camps had a different function. This consisted of the mass slaughter of human beings and the destruction of their corpses. Permanent camps of this type existed only in Poland and were designed exclusively for the killing of European Jewry. These camps gassed to death millions of Jews from Poland, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

There were four major concentration camps in Poland: Oświęcim-Brzezinka (Auschwitz-Birkenau), Majdanek, Sztutowo (Stutthof) and Rogoźnica (Gross-Rosen). Auschwitz was the biggest of all Nazi concentration camps. All of these camps were a separate unit in the vast concentration camp system; in turn they were made up of the parent camp, which included the headquarters of the administration, and several branch camps — called “sub-camps” — which came under it organizationally and administratively (*Nebenlager*, *Zweiglager*, *Aussenlager*, *Arbeitslager*). These were set up near factories, mines, quarries, farms, etc., which were some distance from the parent camp and where the labour of the prisoners could be exploited. The four big camps controlled a total of 160 sub-camps throughout Poland. In each of them the number of prisoners varied from several hundred to several thousand. As far as living conditions, work, and treatment were concerned, there was no difference between the sub-camps and the parent camps.

Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek were at the same time death camps, equipped with special installations for mass killing and destruction of corpses: gas chambers and crematoriums. Four other death camps, which confided themselves solely to killing Jews, were set up at Bełżec and Sobibór in Lublin Province, at Chełmno (Culmhof) in Poznań Province and in Treblinka (Treblinka II) near Warsaw. At Auschwitz and Majdanek, the victims were killed with a chemical mixture called Cyclone B which, when dropped into the gas chamber, gave off hydrogen cyanide. In the other camps the victims were usually killed with carbon monoxide. This was introduced into the gas chamber through pipes connected to special engines which produced the gas. There were also cases when carbon dioxide was used instead; this was introduced into the chamber by connecting cylinders of compressed gas to the water pipes. In Chełmno specially converted lorries were used as gas chambers. They looked like prison wagons covered with green sheet metal, except that there were no openings apart from the doors

at the rear. These were carefully sealed and bolted from the outside. The end of the exhaust pipe opened into the inside. When the engine started, the fumes of the exhaust filled this mobile gas chamber and suffocated the victims.

The death camps were not really camps in the strict sense of the word. They were exclusively centres of mass murder. The victims sent there were liquidated almost on arrival, or several hours later. Thus, although they were included in the overall system of camps run by the SS, they deserve to be treated separately.

Apart from the concentration camps and death camps there were also a number of work camps in Poland. These can be divided into three categories: ordinary, penal, and for Jews.

The ordinary work camps, to which were taken (usually compulsorily) people registered at employment offices and temporarily without a job, were designed to provide an organized labour force. The workers placed in these camps received far better treatment, of course, than the prisoners in penal work camps, and they were paid. They were used for the heaviest jobs, such as river regulation, road-building, land improvement work, etc. Their wages were very low, while living conditions in the camp were no better than the minimum necessary to keep them physically fit for heavy labour. The camps were supervised by the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront* – DAF). The people in the camps worked for various German firms carrying out work in the area. The period spent in these camps was not fixed and the workers were usually allowed to go home once a particular job was completed.

Camps of this kind began to be organized in 1940. Their number reached its peak in 1941–1942. From 1943 on, as the Reich's fortunes on the eastern front slumped, the number of ordinary work camps gradually declined. This is to be attributed, on the one hand, to the cutting of local investments and, on the other, to the more determined and frequent dodging of

compulsory labour by the Poles. By now the Polish resistance movement was increasingly active; the militant underground organizations were going into action and partisan units were stepping up their activities. Important, too, was the fact that the German war industry was drawing more and more on the slave labour of the concentration camps where the number of prisoners was constantly growing.

The second category of work camp was the penal camp. Whatever its official name, whether penal camp (*Straflager*), penal work camp (*Strafarbeitslager*), forced labour camp (*Zwangsarbeitslager*) or reform work camp (*Arbeitserziehungslager*), the object of these camps was similar to that of the concentration camps: to exploit the prisoner as manpower even if it meant working him to death.

An important difference, however, was that detention in a concentration camp was indefinite; in a work camp detention was for a strictly determined period. In principle, the period was one to three months. But in practice, particularly from 1941 onwards, this period was often prolonged even several times over. This was especially frequent in the larger camps — for example in the penal camp of Treblinka I (not to be confused with the nearby death camp of Treblinka II). There were also cases in which prisoners in these camps were sent on to concentration camps after expiry of their sentence.

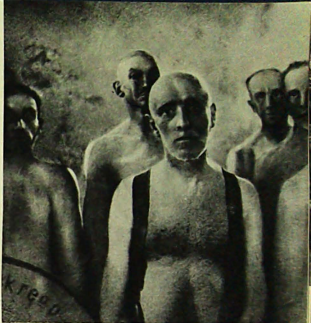
A special variation of the penal camp was the work camp for Jews (*Judenlager* — *Julag*). Although they were not in principle penal camps, the inhuman treatment of the prisoners and the intense exploitation of their labour often produced conditions no better than in the concentration camps. These camps can be dated from the middle of 1941, that is, when Hitler took the decision on the “final solution of the Jewish problem” which sealed the fate of all the Jews in the areas under Nazi rule. The fate of those detained in the *Judenlager* was also fore-judged. Those who did not die in the camps would end up in the gas chambers.

Thus, the whole system of Nazi camps in Poland — both concentration and forced labour — had one joint aim: to destroy the prisoners after having extracted the maximum benefit from their labour. The concentration camps did this on a massive scale, gathering behind their wire tens of thousands, or, as in the case of Auschwitz-Birkenau, over a hundred thousand prisoners. The forced labour camps were smaller in size; they held only several dozen or hundred to several thousand prisoners. But because of their considerable number they played an important role as an instrument in the implementation of the extermination policy.

Unfortunately there are no German statistics providing the number of camps in Poland nor the number of inmates. These documents were probably destroyed, since no such material was found in the Nazi archives which fell into the hands of the Allied occupation authorities. From investigations conducted by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland a few months after the war, in 1945, it appears that there were about 120 various forced labour camps and about 130 work camps for Jews in Poland. Out of this total in about 100 there was an average of 1000–5000 prisoners; in the remaining 140, about 100–600. The average total capacity of all these camps was about 300,000. It must be remembered, however, that there was a constant turnover in prisoners; some died, some were transferred, some were released. Assuming that throughout the five years of the occupation there was only one complete rotation of inmates, then the total number of people who passed through these camps would be about 600,000. In fact, the figure is much higher.

Because of the absence of any official lists of prisoners, it may be assumed on the basis of rough calculations that the vast majority of the inmates of Jewish work camps were either worked to death, exterminated when the camps were liquidated, or transferred to death camps. The same fate, of course, met Jews in the non-Jewish camps, if the camp authorities discov-

The victims before
being led into the mo-
bile gas chamber



Unloading of victims
about to be exter-
minated





Chained prisoners in the "Liban" penal work camp near Cracow

Unloading of victims destined for the gas chamber on the platform at Brzezinka (Birkenau). In the background, on either side of the tracks, can be seen the chimneys of two of the crematoriums



Krakau, den 26. März 1943

(9)

~~Weg für den Dienstverkehr~~

Fahrplanausschnitt Nr. 567

An Strecke Tschernostochau - Skierniewice - Warschau West Pbf -
Warschau Ost Pbf - Rombertow - Tluszcz - Malkinia -
Treblińska, OED und Ost Warschau, 71 Tschernostochau,
Warschau, OBI, OVA, OMA Petrikau, Warschau,
Bü, Bü (Lok), B 41, Bfp 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, M 6, Wt 11, Vt I (3),
Ruf 9, 21, 211, 30 H.

Polizei De-Züge; Sonderzüge mit Umsiedlern.

Gültig: Aufbewahren bis 6. Mai 1943

Zur Beförderung von Umsiedlern aus dem Reich nach Treblińska verkehren
Sonderzüge mit der Bezeichnung Da

in folgendem Fahrplan:

Höchstgeschw.: 45 km/h Mindestbremsl.: 17
ab Warschau Ost : 36
Läst etwa 600 t

A. Fahrplan

bis Tschernostochau nach Fahrplan der RBD Oppeln

Tschernostochau	(an 16.26) ab 17.54 im Plan Dg 90 753 B
Petrikau	20.50/21.14 im Plan Dg 90 749 B
Skierniewice	23.48/ 0.03 im Plan Dg 90 749 B
Pruszkow	1.41/ 2.05 im Plan Dg 90 855 B
Warschau Ost Pbf	2.51/ 3.06 im Sonderplan
Warschau Ost Vbf	3.11 im Sonderplan
Abzw Antoninow	3.17 im Sonderplan
Rombertow	3.24/ 3.28 im Sonderplan
Abzw Zielonka By	3.40 im Plan Dg 97 309 B
Tluszcz	4.20/ 4.22 im Plan Dg 91 307 B
Malkinia	5.43/ 6.20 im Sonderplan
Treblińska	ca 6.20

Lok stellen: RBD Oppeln bis Tschernostochau
Da Tschernostochau bis Petrikau
Da Petrikau bis Skierniewice,
Da Skierniewice bis Warschau Ost
Da Warschau Ost bis Treblińska

Einstellung: RBD Oppeln bis Tschernostochau
Da Tschernostochau bis Petrikau
Da Petrikau bis Warschau Ost Pbf
Da Warschau Ost Pbf bis Treblińska

Time-table for special rail transports of "resettlers" from the Reich to
the extermination camp in Treblińska (first page)

B. Besondere Anordnungen

- 1.) Die Sondersug-Nummern und die Verkehrtage werden jeweils Telegramm bekanntgegeben. Die Fahrplanausweisung 567 ist zum Fahrplanwechsel aufzubewahren.
- 2.) Jeder Sondersug befördert etwa 2000 Personen. Bf Treblinka meldet nach Eingang jedes Sondersuges die Anzahl der beförderten Personen sofort schriftlich an Gedob Bfp 17.
- 3.) Zugbildung: 1 oder 2 Personenwagen, im übrigen G-Wagen. Achsen und Last jedes Sondersuges wird im Telegramm bekanntgegeben. Der Wagensug ist nach der Entladung durch Ozl Warschau nach Warschau zur Entschuckung zu leiten und dann aufzulösen; die Personenwagen mind Gedob Bfp 4 in Bestand zu melden.
- 4.) Zugsetzung: 30.9
- 5.) Bei Unregelmäßigkeiten ist sofort das Fahrplambüro der Gedob auf 1255, 481 oder 1256 zu verständigen.
- 6.) Zl Tschernochau und Ozl Warschau überwachen den Zuglauf und sorgen für pünktliche Durchführung.
- 7.) Der Empfang der Ppla ist den vorgesetzten Amt zu bestätigen.
- 8.) Für die Benachrichtigung der Strecke gelten die Bestimmungen der ANB Verf 1942/206.

gez. S c h m i d

Leglaubigt:

Kilichke
BJ



ered their Jewish blood. Non-Jewish inmates had better chances of survival but even here the death rate was staggering. As in the concentration camps, this was the result of excessive overwork accompanied by a starvation diet and inhuman treatment. To this must be added catastrophic living conditions and the absence of health and hygiene precautions, which were responsible for various diseases and typhus epidemics.

Some idea of the extent of the death rate can be got from the findings of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes dealing with the work camp of Treblinka I.* It discovered mass graves near the camp, containing the remains of former inmates. 41 graves were found with at least 6,500 corpses. According to witnesses there are other mass graves in a forest near the camp, but it has been impossible to find them because of the thick undergrowth. It should be emphasized that the average number of prisoners in the camp at any one time was not much more than a thousand. The camp was in existence four years.

There was one other special category of camp at the beginning of the occupation. From October 1939 to the early months of 1940 there were, mainly in the western parts of Poland what were known as "civilian detention camps" (*Zivilinterniertenlager*). The inmates were mainly political and civic leaders of an anti-Nazi bias (for instance, people who had taken part in the Wielkopolska or Silesian uprisings, active members of the Western Union), members of the intelligentsia, teachers, priests, etc. A large number of these prisoners were murdered right at the beginning of the occupation (for example, in "Fort VII" in Poznań). Some were taken to concentration camps in Germany, a few were released. This type of camp became superfluous as soon as the first concentration camps were set up in Poland.

* Z. Lukaszewicz: "The Labour Camp in Treblinka", Bulletin of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, vol. III, p. 109.

All these camps, except for the death camps, were designed as one of the main instruments in the physical extermination of hundreds of thousands of Poles, which was the ultimate target of Nazi national policy in Poland. The death camps, in which millions of Jews from all over Europe died, were a means to the end of Nazi racist policy, which aimed at the complete extermination of European Jewry.

Chel̩mno Death Camp

Fourteen kilometres from the small county town of Koło in the province of Poznań lies the village Chel̩mno. Koło is on the Łódź-Kutno-Poznań railway line and Chel̩mno is joined to Koło by a narrow-gauge line infrequently used since there is little traffic, and still less before the war. In addition there is a connection with Łódź, 60 kilometres away, by a good though not very busy road. The village is picturesquely situated on the river Ner; its sole distinction was a small "palace" surrounded by a park which belonged to the state. This was, in fact, an old two-storey manor house which was once the property of some landed gentry. Near the park was a small newly-planted pine wood. The palace was unoccupied. Chel̩mno's situation off the busier lines of communication but relatively near Łódź, the second biggest town in Poland, led the Nazis to cast it for a very grim role.

In November 1941, the occupation authorities began some mysterious construction work in Chel̩mno. The park round the palace was encircled by a high, impenetrable fence. In the grounds which contained an old grain mill as well as the palace were built two wooden barracks. At the same time the population of the village was deported, leaving only a few labourers to do odd jobs connected with the building.

At the beginning of December 1941 Jews started arriving in Chel̩mno, brought in small groups from towns in the neigh-

bourhood such as Koło, Dębie, Kłodawa and Sępólno. Later larger transports began to arrive from other towns in the "Warta Country" (Warthegau), mainly from Łódź.

Thousands of people came to Chełmno, but no one ever left. Among the neighbouring villages rumours began to be whispered about the mass extermination of the Jews brought to the palace in Chełmno. Nothing was said out loud, however, for fear of reprisals by the Germans. It was not till the investigation carried out in 1945 soon after the end of the war that the secret hidden behind the fence round the old park during the occupation was revealed.

During the investigation three witnesses were heard who had succeeded in escaping from the camp. They were Michał Podchlebnik, Mieczysław Żurowski and Szymon Srebrnik. Another witness was Bruno Israel, a German gendarme, who had served in the camp from the middle of 1944 until the end. Testimony was also provided by a number of Poles from among the local populace who had the opportunity of making certain observations during the camp's existence.

On the basis of the evidence given, the investigation found that Chełmno, called Culmhof by the Nazis, had been a secret death camp designed for the extermination of Jews.

The camp's main job was to exterminate Jews from the "Warta Country" which was part of the western territories annexed by the Reich. The camp began operations on December 8, 1941. By this time Jews had already been moved to ghettos formed in Łódź and in a number of smaller towns. But in many small towns there were no ghettos; from these came the first victims of the Chełmno death camp.

After liquidating the Jews from towns without a ghetto the Germans turned to the Łódź ghetto. At the same time smaller ghettos in a number of towns were destroyed and the occupants taken to Łódź. This was probably done to allay suspicions, since it would have been impossible to conceal transports of Jews from more distant towns.

In January 1942 the shipments from Łódź began. The early transports consisted of five thousand gypsies who had been placed in the Łódź ghetto, but the later ones were all of Jews. The shipment arrived by rail and consisted of about 1000 people placed in 20–22 passenger wagons. Only one transport arrived daily. In Koło the victims were transferred to the narrow-gauge railway which took them to the station at Powiercie. From there they were marched to Zawadki where a mill was used as a makeshift shelter for the night. After some time the train was extended all the way to Zawadki from where next morning they were taken by lorry to Chełmno. None of the victims realized that this was his last journey.

The Germans took only about 150 persons at a time into the camp itself. In the courtyard a member of the *Sonderkommando*, the special branch of the SS that staffed the camp, reassured them that they were going to be sent to work in the East. He also told them that they would have to hand over their clothes and baggage to be disinfected and go to the bathhouse. Then they were led into the palace, where they undressed in a room on the first floor and in their underclothes went downstairs where a sign directed them down a corridor to "the baths." At the end of this corridor there was a door. Here the Jews were told that they would be taken by van to the baths. In front of the door stood a large van with doors at the rear and special steps for entering. The victims were hustled down the corridor and were bundled into the van with shouts and blows. When the last person had entered, the airtight doors were shut and the engine started. The van was a mobile gas chamber. The outlet of the exhaust was led inside the van which had no openings other than the doors. The fumes that filled the interior choked and suffocated the victims in a matter of minutes. After several minutes, when the screams and poundings of the victims had died down, the van drove off to the Rzuchowski woods about four kilometres away, where the corpses were unloaded. Here any jewellery on the bodies was

removed and gold teeth pulled out; then they were buried in huge pits dug in the wood. All this was carried out by Jewish workers in the *Waldkommando*. From the spring of 1942 they took to burning the bodies. At the same time the bodies of previous victims were dug up and also burnt. The bodies were incinerated in two specially constructed furnaces which were destroyed in April 1943 during the first liquidation of the camp. The ashes were raked out from the furnaces, and any bits of bone that were left were crushed in special pestles. All the ashes were either buried or thrown into the Ner River.

The death camp in Chełmno operated from December 1941 till the middle of April 1943, when it was liquidated. The palace and the furnaces in the wood were blown up, but *Sonderkommando* Culmhof stayed behind. Just before the liquidation, in March, Chełmno was visited by the Gauleiter of the "Warta Country," Artur Greiser. He presented each of the *Sonderkommando* members with a bounty of 500 marks and invited them to spend their leave on his estate near Poznań.

In the spring of 1944 the Chełmno camp revived its mission of death. Two new furnaces for burning bodies were built in the woods. Transports again began to flow in. This time they were taken direct by rail to Chełmno. There the victims spent the night in the church; in the morning they were taken to the wood and, in a temporary barrack, told to undress. The rest of the procedure was the same as before, except that the gas van had a much shorter journey. The camp was reopened probably following the Nazi decision to liquidate the Hungarian Jews as part of the "Hungarian Action." In the end, however, the Hungarian transports were exterminated in Auschwitz. In this second period about ten thousand Jews were slaughtered at Chełmno. In the autumn of 1944 the camp was destroyed once and for all. The barracks were pulled down and the furnaces in the wood blown up; almost all traces of the atrocities were removed. However, the *Sonderkommando* Culmhof and several dozen Jewish assistant workers remained on the scene. In the

middle of January the *Sonderkommando* began to shoot these workers. About fifteen were killed, but the rest put up a fight and killed two Germans. The *Sonderkommando* set fire to the building in which they were holding out. Only two managed to survive, and they were later witnesses in the investigation.

About 360,000 Jews, mainly from Poland, were murdered in Chelmno. The findings of the investigation show that about 25,000 of the victims came from abroad.

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Treblinka

In the middle of 1942 the Nazis build a death camp about four kilometres from the station of Treblinka on the Siedlce-Malkinia line. Situated far from human habitation, this camp became the site for the killing of 750,000 Jews.

The building of the camp, which employed Jews brought from neighbouring towns, began in early June, 1942. The area marked out for the camp (about 33 acres) was surrounded by a barbed wire fence with wooden watch towers at the corners. The barbed wire was stuffed with pine branches to shelter the camp from outside eyes. Inside the camp there were a number of administrative and commissary blocks, quarters for the SS personnel, and barracks for the Jewish workers. Inside the wire fence there was also a siding connected to the station at Treblinka. In a separate, relatively small section of the camp were the installations used for extermination.

The first transport of Jews to be exterminated arrived on July 23, 1942, and from then on there was a regular stream of shipments. The victims were brought by rail. The train was halted at Treblinka and the wagons were shunted by relays into the siding which could not take more than 20 at a time. The Jews were brought in sealed box-cars with often as many as 200 persons in each. As a result of the congestion, many of the weaker died on the way. On arrival the doors were opened, and SS men, waiting on the ramp, dragged out the victims with

shouts and blows and hustled them into an enclosed space inside the camp. Here the men were separated from the women and children. The men who were in good physical condition were taken away to work in the death camp or in the nearby Treblinka I. The rest were ordered to strip in order to be taken to the baths. The men usually undressed in the open, the women and children in one of the barracks. Before undressing they were told to hand over their money and valuables, which the Jewish workers gathered into special suitcases. After this several dozen barbers shaved the women in the barracks. When these preliminaries were completed, the victims were led off in the direction of the gas chambers and manhandled to make them move faster. As was said before, the buildings housing the gas chambers were in a special section of the camp. In the early days of the camp there was only one building with two chambers. A few months later a second building with ten chambers was erected. In the smaller building the chambers were on one side of the corridor, in the larger on both sides. The doors to the chambers were hermetically closed from the outside. In the outside walls were large hatches. The tiled floor sloped towards the outside walls. After gassing the hatches were raised and the victims pulled out, an operation made easier by the slope of the floor. In the ceiling of the chambers were openings through which carbon monoxide was introduced by pipes from an outbuilding where there were engines producing it. In the smaller building the gas chambers were 5×5 metres, in the larger — 7×7 m. The victims were driven inside with their hands raised so as to squeeze in as many as possible.

Death ensued no more than 15 minutes after the engines were started up. The more people packed into the chamber the quicker they suffocated.

To avoid the difficulties that might arise if the arrivals realized what was in store for them, efforts were made both to dupe them with external appearances and to confuse and unnerve them in the hustle and manhandling.

A sham station was erected on the platform of the siding in the camp. The nearby blocks of the camp had signs on the walls indicating a waiting room, buffet, ticket office, etc. Bogus indicators showed them the platform for changing to Białystok, etc. The final stroke of cynicism was a 'hospital' situated in the administrative block in a small compound surrounded by a high, impenetrable fence. The entrance was through a small wooden hut with a Red Cross flag over it. Beyond this was a small building called the "waiting room" in which stood a number of plush sofas. Just past the "waiting room" in the courtyard, a pit had been dug beside which a SS man from the camp shot the victims in the back of the head with a small-calibre pistol. The "hospital" was used to liquidate those who were incapable of moving fast enough from the ramp to the gas chamber, in other words, the sick, the crippled, unattended children, the elderly. The Germans had no time to lose with each transport since another was waiting at the station in Treblinka. Before it could arrive at the siding, the camp had to be cleared up so as not to arouse the suspicions of the new arrivals. The maximum time that elapsed between the arrival of a batch of victims and their gassing was two hours.

In the early days of the camp the bodies of the victims were buried in huge pits inside the camps. These pits had been mechanically dug. In 1943, following a visit by Himmler, the corpses were burnt in order to remove all traces of the crime. At the same time mechanical diggers were used to exhume the corpses in the pits and these too were burnt. The incineration was done in the open air, on a sort of mammoth grill made of railway tracks resting on a concrete parapet. On top of them were laid alternate layers of wood and bodies and the whole heap was doused with some inflammable liquid and set alight. The ashes were mixed with sand and buried.

Treblinka was used mainly for killing Jews from Warsaw or from the former districts of Warsaw and Radom. But there were also Jews from the Białystok ghetto, Grodno and Wołko-

wysko. In addition there were transports of German, Austrian, Czech, Belgian and Greek Jews; these were brought in passenger wagons and their baggage in luggage cars. It was principally for their benefit that the fictitious station was built on the siding in the camp.

Railway records were discovered which enabled investigators to establish the exact date and place of origin of some of the transports. The ruins of the camp destroyed by the Nazi authorities yielded coins from Poland, the Soviet Union, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Belgium, France and even America.

The possessions brought by the victims were confiscated in the camp and sent to the Reich. The size of this loot can be judged from some railway transport figures that have been discovered; these were for a period of three weeks — from September 2–21, 1942. They show that in this period 203 wagons loaded with shoes and clothing of murdered Jews were sent to the Reich from Treblinka. Jews who managed to survive and worked as labourers in the camp have testified that about once every two weeks a large lorry was sent to the Reich carrying suitcases filled with jewellery, banknotes, watches, etc. Women's hair was also sent to the Reich; it was packed in bales.

On August 2, 1943, a revolt broke out which had been planned for some time among the 1,500 Jewish workers in the camp. Some of the camp buildings were burnt; over a dozen SS men were killed from among the camp personnel and the guards. Several hundred prisoners broke out of the camp; some of them evaded recapture.

The Treblinka death camp was liquidated in November 1943. The gas chambers and the other buildings that had survived the revolt were destroyed. All the records were either taken away or burnt. The site of the camp was ploughed over and even sown. An attempt was made to settle it with Ukrainians. These, however, fled before the advance of the Soviet Army in 1944.

Auschwitz and Genocide

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest of all the Nazi concentration and death camps. Even before the end of the war rumours had been filtering through of the terrible conditions of existence, the fantastic slave-driving, and the barbaric treatment of the inmates who were dying in their thousands after a few months in the camp. It was not till after the war, however, when the few survivors of the camp returned to their native countries, that the whole truth about life, or rather death, in this gigantic prison combine became known to the world. But it is only what actually happened in the camp that is known, especially the martyrdom of its victims. It is worth examining what role the camp was to have played in the future in the Nazi plans — and certainly would have played had the Reich been victorious.

This camp was built in the first half of 1940 in Zasole, on the outskirts of Oświęcim. The headquarters were in former military barracks. The first transports arrived in June 1940. The original orders from the SS central authorities had called for the construction of a concentration camp for ten thousand inmates. But even before this project had been completed orders came from Berlin for further expansion.

There can be no doubt that the SS leaders intended the camp to keep on growing. This is evident from the fact that the camp's administration included a department called the "Cen-

tral Construction Office of the Waffen SS and Police for Auschwitz" (*Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei – Auschwitz*), which came immediately under the SS authorities. Its job was to expand the camp in accordance with the plans and directives received from Berlin.

Between the time of its foundation and autumn 1941 the camp was extended until it was almost twice its originally planned size. At the end of 1941 it held 18,000 prisoners. From autumn, 1941, the rate of extension grew rapidly. This was connected with the intensification of terror and the undertaking of genocide on a mass scale.

After the attack on the Soviet Union in the middle of 1941, Hitler took the decision on the "final solution of the Jewish problem" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). The "solution" meant the gradual extermination of all Jews in all the countries coming under Nazi occupation.

This undertaking was entrusted to the SS, which decided that the most suitable place in which it could be carried out was Poland. Emphasizing the highly confidential nature of this decision, Himmler gave Hoess – the Auschwitz Commandant – orders to prepare the necessary installations in the camp.

In October 1941, construction began on the marshy terrain of Brzezinka (Birkenau), about 4 kilometres from Auschwitz, of a huge new camp, said to be intended for prisoners of war. In the surviving fragments of the correspondence between the camp administration and the Berlin office there are frequent references to "special treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) of prisoners which was to be undertaken in the camp under construction. This term was of course, a code name concealing mass murder.

According to the original plans for Birkenau the camp was designed to hold 200,000 prisoners; but the site marked out lent itself to further considerable extension.

In January 1942 the first transports of Polish Jews arrived. They had come as part of a "special action" (*Sonderaktion*) and were condemned to instant liquidation. In the beginning, Birke-

nau tried to some extent to conceal the exterminations by making it appear that the Jews who arrived were to be detained for some period of time.

The enormous amount of resources being consumed by the war with the Soviet Union entailed a constant raising of output by the Nazi war industry and a number of subsidiary branches. As a result German industry, with hundreds of thousands of potential workers inducted into military service, was suffering more and more from an acute labour shortage. Himmler's solution was to make available to industry the manpower of the concentration camps. At the same time he issued a series of orders for the SS and police to provide a more intensive flow of prisoners to the concentration camps.

Some idea of the scale on which the extension of Auschwitz was conducted can be had from a few statistics provided by authentic records discovered in the camp. In 1942 there was a daily average of about 8,000 prisoners employed in the expansion work ordered by Berlin. In 1943 this figure rose to over 9,500 prisoners and about 950 non-prisoners. In 1944 the figures were 4,000 and 200 respectively.

As a result of this development the camp at Birkenau had three sectors holding a total of 140,000 prisoners. There were also plans for a fourth sector to hold 60,000. Preliminary work was begun on this, but abandoned with the flight of the Nazis in 1945.

The extermination campaign directed against the Jews took on greater and greater dimensions. The transports from the occupied countries became larger and more frequent.

The methods used up to then to gas the victims and burn their corpses no longer satisfied the Nazis. After an inspection of the camp in the summer of 1942 by Himmler the decision was taken to construct huge, modern-equipped crematoriums in Birkenau connected with the gas chambers. The job was given to the firm of *J. A. Topf und Söhne* in Erfurt.

In the early spring of 1942 two huge twin crematoriums, in

which it was possible to incinerate about ten thousand bodies daily, went into operation. At the same time the parent camp had been considerably extended in 1943 and could hold 30,000 inmates.

The ultimate purpose of the concentration camp in the Nazi system was to bring about the death sooner or later of the prisoners after having first exploited their labour to the maximum. The SS leaders did not shrink from selling the slave labour of the prisoners to German industrialists, particularly the huge concerns and trusts. The capitalists acquired unpaid workers whom they could employ as they liked and the SS made a substantial sum of money on the sale.

As an example it is worth quoting some figures contained in Nazi documents concerning the employment of prisoners at a refinery at Trzebionka, where one of the Auschwitz sub-camps was situated. For each day's work put in by a skilled worker provided by the camp, the administration received 6 marks; for an unskilled worker — 4 marks. The upkeep of each worker cost the camp an estimated 30 pfennigs a day. The prisoner, it needs hardly be said, received not a penny.

Slave labour was employed in factories, mines and timber concerns. In Monowice, near Auschwitz, the firm of *I. G. Farben-Industrie* built the "Buna" synthetic petrol factory, Krupp opened the "Union" detonator works, *Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke* started a cement works. Both in the building and the operation of these works the manpower was drawn almost exclusively from the camp.

A number of enterprises "bought" workers for factories, mines and various types of works throughout Upper Silesia. Since this was too far from Auschwitz a sub-camp was established near each of these enterprises. In this way, to the parent camp and Birkenau was added a network of 30 sub-camps scattered over Upper Silesia, all of which made up the huge Auschwitz combine.

Among the Auschwitz records have been found plans for

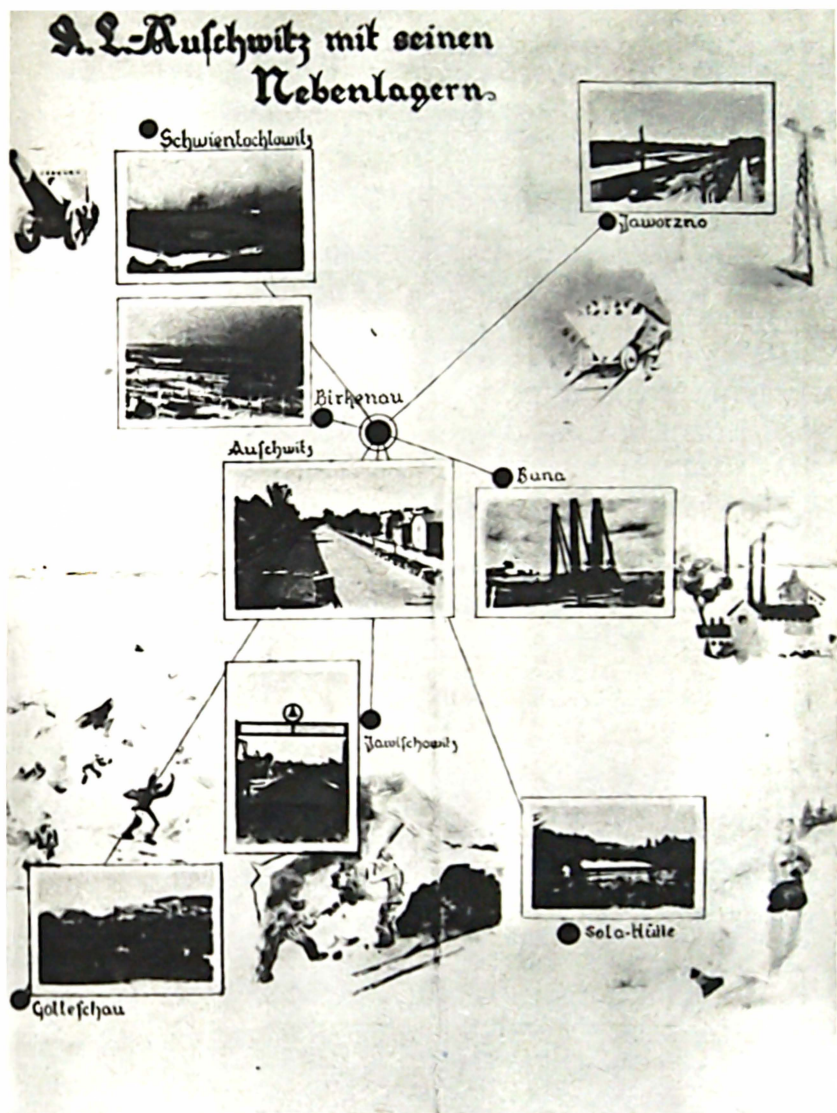
building additional crematoriums. On this subject there is also correspondence between the Construction Office of the Camp, the Central SS authorities and the firm of *Topf und Söhne*.

It is noteworthy that, apart from the personnel barracks, the crematoriums were the only solidly constructed buildings in the whole camp. Their deep foundations and concrete walls show that they were intended for long use, undoubtedly longer than that required by the campaign to exterminate the Jews. It is of course impossible to reconstruct precisely the further extermination plans, the more so since they were not initiated by the camp authorities but by the leaders of the NSDAP and the government of the Third Reich.

Among records which the Nazis did not have time to destroy there is the comparatively abundant documentation of the Construction Office; however, this is almost entirely confined to work already completed. Only a very small fraction of these records — and only an insignificant portion was found — concerned with future building. From these and the evidence of Hoess it appears that there were plans to build one more crematorium (bringing the number up to six). However, this plan was later revised. The new crematorium, referred to as VI, appears instead in the plans for the extension of the parent camp. It was to be a huge crematorium fitted with the latest equipment produced by the firm of *Topf und Söhne*. The number of bodies that it could burn daily was to be greater than in either of the two large crematoriums in Birkenau.

Among the records of the Construction Office there is a plan for the extension of the parent camp, ratified by the SS central authorities and bearing the date of July 7, 1944. According to this plan there was to be a new complex of buildings, consisting of 45 prison blocks and a number of commissary buildings. Bearing in mind that the parent camp already contained 28 blocks housing 30,000 prisoners, it can be estimated that the extension plans would have raised the capacity of the camp to 90,000.

It is significant that this plan also mentions that the "Union"



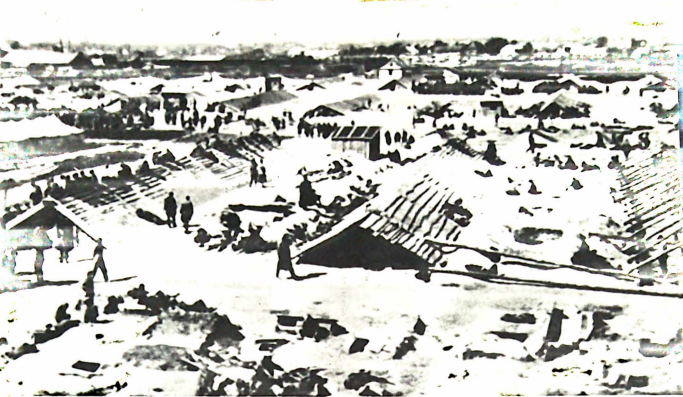
Auschwitz and its branch camps. Photograph of a German chart



Corpses of prisoners from Block 11 murdered just before the liberation
of Auschwitz

Shoes of Auschwitz prisoners





General view of the camp for Soviet prisoners-of-war in Borek, Lublin Province

factory, part of the Krupp combine, situated near the parent camp, was to be considerably enlarged. Items of correspondence and the evidence of Hoess show that the firm of *I. G. Farben-Industrie*, whose "Buna" synthetic petrol factory in Monowice employed the slave labour of 25,000 prisoners, also had plans for extending its works by introducing the production of synthetic rubber. It is obvious that the extension of these factories was directly connected with the plans to enlarge the camp, which was the source of slave labour.

The extension of the parent camp was to be accompanied by extension of Birkenau. As has already been mentioned, preliminary work had been started on the building of a fourth sector to hold 60,000 prisoners. In the records of the Construction Office there are repeated references to further extension. Other indications of this project come from provisional sketches of the camp, from which it is possible to conclude that the building of additional sectors would have raised the capacity of the camp to over 300,000 prisoners.

The land surrounding the camp, about 40 square kilometres in area, lying in the fork of the Vistula and its eastern tributary, the Soła, was taken over as the "economic area" (*Interessengebiet*) of the camp. The local inhabitants (from 10 villages and Zasole, on the outskirts of Oświęcim) were deported and the whole region made the property of the SS. It is typical that the area marked out for extension of the camp was to the north and west, which was humid and marshy and the least healthy part of the large "economic area."

On the basis of these documents, all of them from Nazi sources, it is possible to say that the Germans planned a considerable extension of the Auschwitz camp. In the course of a few years they intended to expand the parent camp and Brzezinka until together they could hold at least 400,000 prisoners.

During the existence of the concentration camp of Auschwitz about 405,000 prisoners were given registration numbers; apart from Poles, who were the majority, there were Austrians, Bel-

gians, Czechs, Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Russians, Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Gypsies, Jews from almost the whole of Europe and even a Chinese, Egyptian and Iranian. The conditions of life in the camp and the exploitation of the prisoners as slave labour led to the death of over 75 per cent of them.

The concentration camps were one of the vilest weapons used by the Nazis; they were employed not only to rid themselves of their political opponents but also physically to wipe out the greatest possible number of members of the Slav nations, against whom they conducted a campaign of genocide.

The continual additions to the Auschwitz camp and the plans for still further extension, taken together with the Nazi plans for a "New Order" in eastern Europe show that the Third Reich had every intention of making use of this weapon on a still wider scale.

Camps for Soviet Prisoners of War

Apart from the camps already described there was also a special category of camp in Poland during the occupation for Soviet prisoners of war.

The P.O.W. camps for other nationalities, whether for officers (Oflags) or for other ranks (Stalags) came under the German military authorities. The treatment of their inmates was basically different from that of prisoners in the camps run by the SS, that is the concentration and penal camps, and the various types of forced labour camps. Among the P.O.W. camps the exception were those for Soviet prisoners.

Although these camps also came under the military authorities, with the administration and guards drawn from the Wehrmacht, the treatment of the inmates was very different from that of prisoners of other nationalities. Officers and other ranks were detained in the same camps which were literally destruction camps. The conditions in them as regards quarters, food, hygiene, health and medical attention and the treatment of the inmates were such that they would lead inevitably to the death, within a few months, of the vast majority of the prisoners. It was not till 1943 when the military situation of the Reich, particularly in the eastern front began to decline, when the enormous requirements of this front began to exhaust the German economic potential, and the war industry began to suffer from an increasingly acute shortage of manpower, that the situation of

the Soviet prisoners of war began to show some improvement: they were employed in industrial work in the Reich. Conditions in the camps themselves also improved a little. But by then about two million prisoners had died. This figure was given by SS-Hauptsturmführer Königshaus, from the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA), at a conference of representatives of the "action groups" in these camps, held on January 27, 1943, in Lublin.* The cause of death of this vast number of Soviet prisoners was given by him as typhoid fever and "other epidemics." This figure, then, covered those who had died a "natural death." It is not hard to imagine what must have been the conditions in these camps if they could lead to the death of two million persons in the 18 months since the attack on the Soviet Union, remembering that they were soldiers who must have been young, healthy and fit.

Between 1945 and 1948 the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland investigated over 30 camps for Soviet prisoners of war in Poland. These inquiries only included camps that had contained more than ten thousand prisoners. In the case of the largest camps — Łambinowice (Lamsdorf), Ostrów Mazowiecka, and Dęblin — the investigations were carried out jointly with the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission for Investigating Nazi Crimes. At the time hardly any traces were left of the majority of the camps since they were usually constructed along very makeshift lines. As a result of the mass death of the inmates, most of the camps had been liquidated and pulled down by the end of 1943 or the beginning of 1944.

The findings were based on the evidence of witnesses, mainly Polish, who had lived near the camps, on contemporary German photographs, and on examination of the sites and exhumation of mass graves that were usually found in the vicinity of the camps.

* Records of the Appellate Court in Lublin in Case No. K 104/49, A. Giese (Main Commission No. 299).

In the great majority of cases, the exhumations were only tentative and intended merely to determine the size of the graves and the approximate number of bodies in them. To carry out complete exhumations proved too difficult on account of the enormous number of victims, and at the same time purposeless as there was absolutely no hope of identifying even some of them. The bodies had been buried without clothing and without any distinguishing marks.

The findings showed, that the Nazi authorities had tried to wipe out all traces of the genocide committed on the Soviet prisoners. This was evident from the unusually thorough clearing of the site of some of the camps, mainly the larger ones, such as Ostrów Mazowiecka, Suchożebry near Siedlce, Beniaminów in Warsaw County, Bogusze near Białystok, etc. The wooden barracks in which the prisoners lived had been pulled down, the fences dismantled and the ground ploughed over. The mass graves were so carefully concealed that it proved impossible to find many of them, even though witnesses had agreed that they existed. To hide them, the Germans had filled them in with earth, rolled them and then ploughed them over if they were in a field, or covered them with turf if in meadows, fallow fields or woods. In several cases the graves were only discovered because the local populace had secretly marked the spot during the occupation with special signs like slashed trees, pegs stuck into the ground, stones, etc. It was also found that the corpses were sometimes burned and the ashes buried.

No German documents were found which would have enabled the investigating bodies to determine the number of Soviet prisoners of war who passed through the camps in Poland nor the number of those who died. The only records that were found were among the Auschwitz documents and concerned the Soviet prisoners who were sent there at the end of 1941 to work on the building of a P.O.W. camp in Birkenau. From these records it emerges that out of about 10,000 registered prisoners of war barely 96 were still alive according to a list drawn up on January

17, 1945. Some of them were murdered during an action to liquidate political opponents; but even assuming that 30 per cent of them perished in this way, the death rate among the Soviet prisoners is still far higher than the average for the rest of Auschwitz inmates.

According to the findings of the Main Commission there were about 500,000 bodies in all the mass graves found near the Soviet P.O.W. camps. This figure is based on estimates arrived at from the test exhumations. The actual figure should undoubtedly be placed much higher. It must be remembered that a certain number of mass graves have never been found, that some of the bodies were burnt, and that the investigations did not take in a number of smaller camps in which a fairly large number of prisoners also died.

From the findings it emerged that though there might have been certain differences between individual camps as far as quarters or kind of work done were concerned, in principle the general treatment meted out in them was the same. The system aimed at destroying the greatest possible number of prisoners by driving them to a "natural" death. The first stage towards this goal was the condition under which these prisoners were transported. They were brought in sealed cattle cars, crammed to bursting point. The journey to their destination was particularly slow, sometimes taking 2-3 days. Throughout, the wagons were never opened. The prisoners were given no food or water. Their natural functions had to be performed in the sealed wagons. Under these conditions, especially in the heat of summer or the cold of winter, ten to twenty people died in each wagon.

In the camps the prisoners were detained mainly in temporary wooden barracks without floors and with leaky roofs. In winter they were cold and damp since there was no heating. When it rained or thawed the uncovered floors were full of mud and puddles.

There were cases when the prisoners were put in a "camp" which consisted only of an empty site surrounded by a barbed-

wire fence and watch towers. On arrival the prisoners themselves had to build makeshift shelters as protection against cold, rain and snow.

There was a similar situation in one of the largest of the camps: Łambinowice (Lamsdorf) near Opole (Oppeln). In 1939 a camp had been constructed here for Polish prisoners; in 1940 prisoners of other nationalities were brought. In the autumn of 1941 the first transport of Soviet prisoners arrived and a separate camp was set up for them. There were no quarters for the prisoners in this camp. Using only basins and spoons they had to dig themselves holes which they then covered over with straw and earth. Two to three people lived in each of these holes. Frequently they collapsed, for there were no planks or wood to reinforce the roofing. It was not till 1942 that wooden barracks with concrete flooring were built, but even these were unheated. The official name of this camp was Stalag 344.

The quarters were no better in the other large camp, Stalag 307, which was set up in the old castle of Dęblin on the borders of the provinces of Warsaw and Lublin. The prisoners were housed in the old dungeons which were unlighted, damp and unheated. This was one of the biggest camps. Up to 1942 over 100,000 prisoners had been brought here. After this, the transports ceased and in the middle of 1943 there were only several thousand left in the camp. Some had been murdered during the liquidation campaign of political opponents, a very small number had been sent to forced labour in the Reich, and the rest had died of hunger and disease.

Calculations based on the test exhumations of mass graves show that over 80,000 died in this camp. Some idea of the size of this charnel-house can be conveyed by a description of the largest of the mass graves. This was an enormous pit dug in front of the castle. It was about 6 metres deep and about 7,000 square metres in area. In the winter of 1941/42 this pit had been filled with bodies and additional graves had to be dug elsewhere.

It hardly needs to be said that there was no question of any

sanitary or medical facilities in camps with such primitive quarters. They had no drains and usually no running water. On arrival in the camp part of the uniforms of the prisoners would be taken away and in exchange they would be given tattered clothing stripped from their dead predecessors. Leather footwear would also be confiscated and replaced with wooden clogs. Because of the difficulties with the water supply the prisoners lived in conditions of incredible filth. They were issued no extra underwear, and lack of soap and water made it impossible to wash what they were wearing when they arrived. They had to sleep on bare boards since straw was not always provided. Mattresses and blankets were never even considered.

Theoretically there was a hospital in every camp. In practice the "hospital" was a pure travesty. In Łambinowice, for example, about 1,500 patients were housed in 20-odd small rooms in a wooden barrack. In each room there were about 40-50 persons in double- or triple-tier bunks with two or even three to each bunk. There were no bedclothes, only paper mattresses stuffed with shavings that were never changed. There was no qualified medical attention. The patients received no medicines and their food was no different from the usual camp diet. Obviously, a "hospital" of this sort was in no condition to fulfil its fundamental function, the healing of the sick. It is not surprising that the death rate was astronomical.

The main cause of disease and death in the camps was hunger. Under the orders issued by the Army General Staff (OKH) on August 6, 1941,* a four-weeks' ration for each Soviet prisoner was to consist of: 6 kilograms of bread, 400 grams of meat, 440 grams of fats, and 600 grams of sugar. It has to be added that these products did not contain their full food values, the bread had only 50 per cent pure rye, the rest being worthless additions such as flour made from wood or chestnuts. The "meat"

* Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 1947, p. 350. Document USSR — 349, 225-D.

was mainly bones. As for sugar, the prisoners usually did not receive their ration at all. Even if these rations had consisted of full-value food products and each prisoner had received his full ration, their calory content would still have been so low that death would have had to ensue after a few weeks of such a diet. According to the norms set out in the Wehrmacht order, the daily ration of a Soviet prisoner consisted of 215 grams of bread (*Russenbrot*), which contained only 50 per cent full-value rye, about 14 grams of meat, about 16 grams of fats, and about 21.5 grams of sugar. The calory value of this diet comes to barely 515 calories. Actually, it was even smaller, for the prisoners did not receive the full rations to which they were entitled. To realize just how serious the undernourishment of the Soviet prisoners was, it is worth remembering that a man working normally requires a minimum of 3,600 calories a day to keep his body in a state of normal fitness. The Soviet prisoners who did not work, received barely one-seventh of this minimum, those who worked, about one-fifth. It is not surprising that they died off like flies. Here is a description given by Rudolf Hoess, the Auschwitz Commandant, of the Soviet prisoners sent to him in autumn 1941 to build the P.O.W. camp in Birkenau.

"They were brought from the P.O.W. camp in Łambinowice, Upper Silesia, in a state of complete exhaustion. They had arrived in Łambinowice after a several weeks' march. On the way they had received practically no food; during the breaks in the march they had been led into the nearest field and there ate anything that could be eaten. In Łambinowice, I was told, there were about 200,000 Soviet prisoners of war. They lived mostly in dugouts built by themselves. Their diet was quite inadequate and irregular. They had to do their own cooking in the dugouts. Most of them 'gobbled' up — you could hardly call it eating — their ration raw...

"It was with these prisoners, who were often incapable of keeping on their feet, that I was supposed to build a P.O.W. camp in Birkenau. According to the orders of the Reichsführer

SS only such Soviet prisoners as were particularly strong and suitable for work were to be brought to Auschwitz. The officers in charge of the escort said they had picked the best human material among the masses of prisoners at their disposal..

"For some time, I employed about 5,000 Russians almost every day on unloading wagons of turnips. The whole railway line was crammed; piles of turnips were lying on the tracks and we could do nothing about it. The Russians were in no state to do anything. They walked aimlessly around in circles, or hid in some safe hole where they could swallow anything that could be eaten, or looked for some quiet spot where they could lie down and die in peace...

"Out of a total of over 10,000 Soviet prisoners of war who were to be the main labour force in the construction of the P.O.W. camp at Birkenau only several hundred were still alive in 1942."*

This starving of Soviet prisoners was far from being merely the result of a food shortage; it was the logical outcome of a deliberate system aimed at wiping out the maximum number of Soviet citizens. This is evident from the universally known fact that Poles were forbidden to give food to Soviet prisoners; anyone who broke this ban was liable to a severe penalty that could include being shot on the spot.

Probably the most authoritative document describing the fate of Soviet prisoners is a letter sent by Rosenberg, then Minister for the Occupied Territories, to Keitel, head of the Army General Staff, on February 28, 1942. This letter deals with the whole question of prisoners of war. Below are quoted the most eloquent paragraphs:

"The fate of the Soviet prisoners in Germany is, however, a tragedy of enormous proportions. Out of 3,600,000 prisoners there are today barely several hundred fully capable of work.

* *Kommandant in Auschwitz, Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen von Rudolf Hoess. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt Stuttgart, 1958, p. 102 ff.*

The majority of them have either starved or died as a result of bad climatic conditions. Thousands have died of typhus... However, in the majority of cases the camp commandants have forbidden the civilian population to give food to the prisoners who have been sentenced to death by starvation. Indeed, in many cases when the prisoners were unable to keep up on the march because of hunger and exhaustion they were shot in full view of the horrified population and their bodies abandoned. In many camps no effort has been made to provide quarters for the prisoners. Rain or snow, they have been lying out in the open. They were not even supplied with tools with which they could have dug themselves holes in the ground or dugouts. Systematic delousing of the prisoners in the camps and of the camps themselves has been expressly neglected. "The more of these prisoners that die, the better for us is the sort of thing that is being said." *

This treatment of Soviet prisoners and the feeling that "the more die, the better" was not the result of personal vindictiveness on the part of individual camp commandants, it was part of a planned system imposed by the highest authorities of the Reich.

Proof of this is a confidential memorandum from the Army General Staff, September 8, 1941, and signed by General Reinecke; to this there is added an enclosure containing a secret order on the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war in all P.O.W. camps. The order which bears the same date as the memorandum includes the following:

"Bolshevism is the mortal enemy of National Socialist Germany. For the first time the German soldier is faced by an adversary trained not only from the military point of view, but also politically, in the subversive sense of Bolshevism. The struggle against National Socialism has entered his blood. He

* Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 1947, Document 081-PS, pp. 156 ff.

carries it on using every available means of sabotage, subversive propaganda, arson and murder. As a result the Bolshevik soldier has lost all right to being treated as a legitimate soldier according to the principles of the Geneva Convention...

"Disobedience, active or passive resistance must be immediately and totally crushed with the use of arms (bayonets, rifle butts, firearms). The regulations on the use of arms by the Wehrmacht are only in part binding since it is assumed that they are applied in conditions of general calm... Anyone who in carrying out an order fails to use, or is too gentle in his use of arms, is liable to punishment. Escaping prisoners are to be shot immediately without being first challenged to halt. It is forbidden to shoot for purposes of intimidation... The use of arms against a Soviet prisoner is, as a rule, to be regarded as complying with the law... Steps are to be taken to prevent any contacts between the prisoners and civilians. This rule is to be observed especially in the occupied territories."*

From this it is apparent that the intense discrimination suffered by the Soviet prisoners of war had been ordered by the Army General Staff. The inspiration presumably came from the leadership of the Nazi Party. This is borne out by the political and ideological character of the introduction and by the fact that the order was sent to all Gauleiters and Kreisleiters by Bormann, head of the NSDAP Central Office, that is the supreme organizational body in the Party. The object was obviously to encourage the local Party apparatus to make sure that these orders were strictly carried out.

It is, of course, difficult to say what was the real reason for this discrimination: the hatred of the Nazis for the Communist ideology and their fear that it would be spread by captured Soviet troops, or the desire rapidly to liquidate the largest possible number of citizens of the Soviet Union, particularly the Russians, which would have fitted in with the Nazi plans for

* Ibid.

future "order" of Eastern Europe. Probably it was the second of these aims that inspired these general directives on the treatment of Soviet prisoners since there were other special instructions, already in force, concerning the elimination of "politically hostile elements" among the Soviet prisoners.

Order No. 8 (*Einsatzbefehl* No. 8), issued by Heydrich on July 17, 1941, was supplemented by three enclosures. Two of them contain detailed instructions for the "Action Commandos" (*Einsatzkommandos*) of the Security Police and Security Service posted in all the P.O.W. camps for Soviet troops.

In enclosure No. 1 there are instructions for combing out all civilians and "suspect" persons in these camps.

"The Wehrmacht must immediately rid itself of all those elements among the prisoners of war who are to be regarded as sowers of Bolshevism. The peculiar conditions of the eastern campaign require special measures which are to be applied on your own responsibility, without bureaucratic and administrative delays.

"While previous regulations and orders concerning prisoners of war were exclusively concerned with military aims, the realization of political aims is now to be sought, in order to protect the German nation from Bolshevik agitators and to get a firm grip from the start on the occupied territory."*

Further on the instruction contains orders to split the prisoners in the camps into soldiers and civilians and to carry out a political screening. The screening is to be the responsibility of members of the *Einsatzkommandos*.

Enclosure No. 2 discusses in detail the manner in which the screening is to be carried out in order to find the politically "suspect" elements. The "Action Commandos" were told not to begin the operation until they had collected all the evidence necessary. They were to draw not only their own observations

* Trial, No. 9, document of the prosecution, vol. 1, p. 84, document No. 3414.

and findings but also use information given them by the camp commandants.

Further on the instruction says:

"Above all you must uncover all important State and Party officials, particularly professional revolutionaries (*Berufsrevolutionäre*), Comintern officials, all responsible party officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its apparatus at the Central Committee, District Committee and Regional Committee level, all People's Commissars and their deputies, all former Political Commissars of the Red Army, persons occupying leading positions in central institutions and local state administration, and executive positions in economic life, Soviet intellectuals, all Jews, all persons who are found to be agitators or fanatical Communists."*

The leader of the camp *Einsatzkommandos* was to send every week a list of the persons, screened according to these directives, to the Reich Security Office which would then decide on further action. As a rule, the RSHA ordered their liquidation; in other words, they were shot. The instructions expressly forbade the executions to be carried out in or near the camp. If a camp in the Government General was situated near the old Soviet border, the execution was to be carried out in the territory of the Soviet Union. Order No. 9 issued a few days later, on July 21, 1941, said that the executions had to be carried out in the nearest concentration camp, though, of course, they were to be kept secret. It was on the basis of this order that in the autumn of 1941 several hundred "politically suspect" Soviet prisoners were liquidated in Block 11 at Auschwitz; this was also the first time that Cyclone B, a gas previously used as an insecticide, was employed on human beings.

These orders and instructions might lead one to suppose that once the camps had been cleared of "politically dangerous"

* Trial, No. 9, document of the prosecution, vol. 1 p. 84 document NO 3414

elements, the rest of the prisoners would be treated in some human fashion. Actual practice is far from bearing out any such ideas. All orders, regulations and instructions regarding the treatment of Soviet prisoners remained in force up to the end of the war, although from 1944 they in fact lapsed because of the war situation. The full barbarism and illegality of this treatment can be judged from the fact that it even aroused the misgivings of the top military leaders in Germany. For example, Admiral Canaris, head of German Intelligence, wrote to General Keitel, head of the Army General Staff, that the Secret order put out by General Reinecke on November 8, 1941, violated the principles of international law. To this letter Keitel merely added a characteristic note, dated November 23, 1941: "these objections spring from military notions of conducting war in a chivalrous spirit. We are concerned with destroying an ideology. As a result, I approve and endorse the orders that have been issued." *

Keitel was, of course, referring to the Communist ideology.

The fate of the Soviet prisoners who fell into German hands had been decided by the Nazi leaders even before the war had begun. Nazism had sentenced them to death, and the sentence was systematically carried out on the prisoners in the camps in Poland.

* Trial of the Major War Criminals, Nuremberg, 1948, vol. XXII, p. 535.

Extermination of the Jews

One of the tasks set itself by Nazi Germany in its plans for the New Order in Europe to follow the victorious war, was the total removal of Jews from the areas which would come under its political influence, and, of course, from the territories which were to become part of the future "Great Reich." At first, the details of how this task was to be carried out were vague. Before the outbreak of the war some of the Nazi leaders were still entertaining schemes for the forced emigration of European Jews to Madagascar. This idea re-appeared in the early days of the war. It was mentioned by Himmler, for instance, in a report dated May 15, 1940, and entitled "Some Comments on the Treatment of Foreign Nationals in the East."*

"It is my belief that the possibility of a mass migration of Jews to Africa or some other colony means that I shall live to see the total extinction of the idea of Jews."

Still more explicit was the statement made by Governor General Hans Frank at a session of departmental chiefs of his "Government" on July 12, 1940.**

"I also attach great importance to the Führer's decision taken at my suggestion that there will be no more transports of Jews

* *Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten* (see footnote on page 30.)

** Hans Frank's Diary. Session of Departmental Chiefs 1939—40.

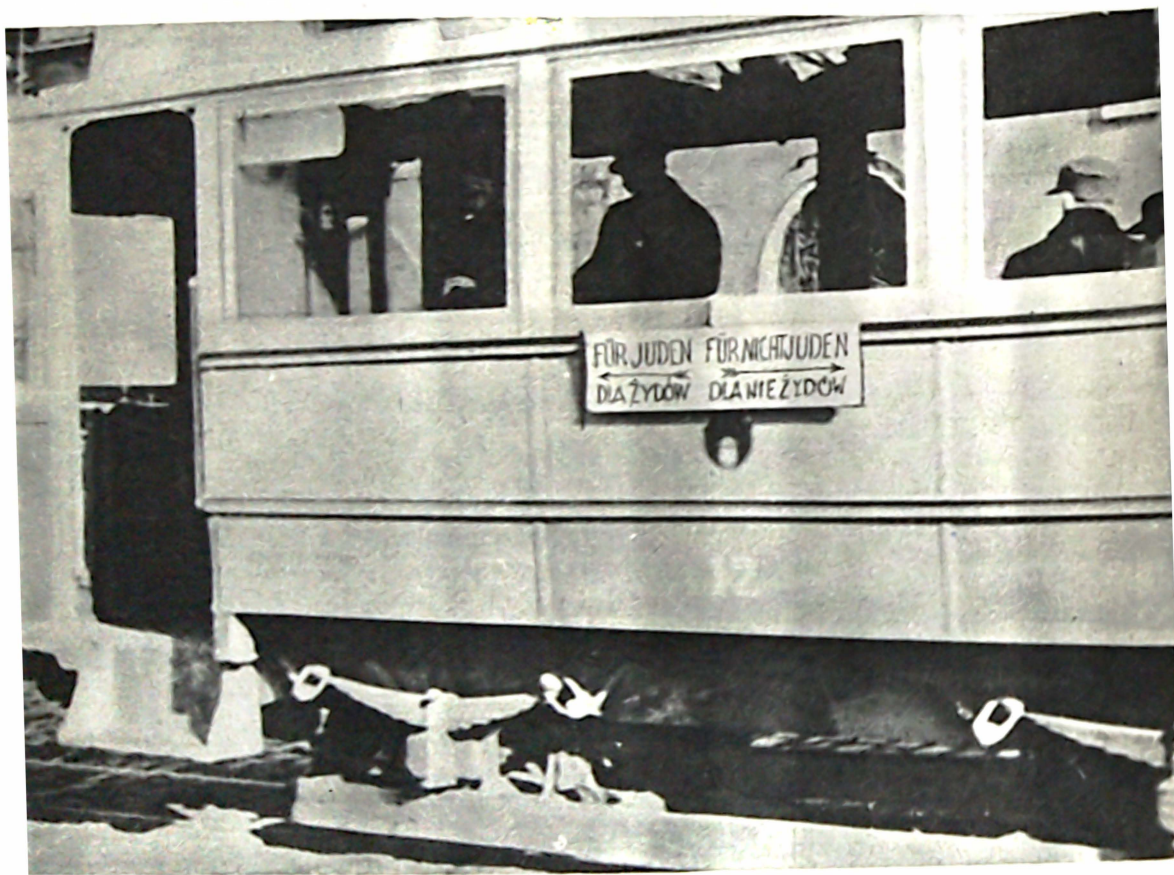


A Soviet prisoner in the "cage"

The clothes pulled off a dead prisoner



A Warsaw tram in the early days of the occupation



1931-1932 337/65

Aktion gegen 6000 Juden in Plońsk

Jan 1931-1932 337/65

Jan 1931-1932 337/65



Jan 1933-1934 341/65



Jan 1936-1937 342/65



Jan 1937-1938 342/65



Jan 1938-1939 341/65



Jan 1939-1940 341/65



110. Einlösung der Forderungen im H. L. Auschwitz.

Im Sommer 1941 - den gesamten Zeit raum umspannt
1. H. nicht angucken - sondern ist plöglich zum Reichsleiter
nach Berlin befohlen und wird durch seine Auf-
nahme. - Ingeborg wurde nachfolgend beauftragt
mit dem Einbau eines Gebäudes, dem heute nachfolgend:
1. H. wurde das die Einlösung der Forderungen befohlen,
die - die - haben diesem Befehl nachzukommen.
Die beabsichtigten Einlösungsbefehle im Leben wird nicht an
die Lage die beabsichtigenden großen Leistungen durchzuführen.
Es habe daher beabsichtigt dafür beabsichtigt, einmal wegen der
gründigen wirtschaftlichen Lage sind gewisse Lager mit
das dafür die zu beabsichtigende Arbeit leicht abgeben sind
lassen. Es habe mit diesen letzten 11. Forderungen für diese
Aufgabe angestrebt, um aber Einlösungsbefehle, werden zu
H. beabsichtigt zu beabsichtigen und beabsichtigt das sind die letzten
sind die Aufgabe durchzuführen. Es ist eine letzte
und mehrere Arbeit, die den Einbau der jungen Person
beabsichtigt. Eine Einlösung auf diese beabsichtigte Leistung, die
- habe beabsichtigt beabsichtigt die durch beabsichtigt, beabsichtigen
um H. H., der in diesem Zeit zu beabsichtigen beabsichtigen.
Die beabsichtigten beabsichtigen werden von mir zu beabsichtigen
Zeit beabsichtigt. Es haben mit diesen beabsichtigen, beabsichtigen,
Hilfsleistungen, selbst ihrem beabsichtigen beabsichtigen zu beabsichtigen.
Nach der beabsichtigen mit beabsichtigen beabsichtigen die zu
sind die Forderungen der beabsichtigten beabsichtigen zu.
Es haben mit die beabsichtigen Forderungen der beabsichtigen, beabsichtigen
und beabsichtigen angestrebt werden alle die zu beabsichtigen
beabsichtigen beabsichtigen, sind die beabsichtigen der beabsichtigen
eine beabsichtigen zu beabsichtigen. Es ist es eine
nicht die beabsichtigen beabsichtigen.

to the Government General. Proceeding on the principles of general policy, I would like to add that it is planned to transport the whole Jewish nation from the German Reich, the General Government and the Protectorate to some African or American colony as soon as possible after the conclusion of peace. Madagascar, which France will cede for this purpose, is the place envisaged. An area of 500,000 sq. km. there will be enough space for several million Jews. I have made efforts to enable the Jews from the Government General also to take part in this useful enterprise of building themselves a new life in a new country."

Dr. Schön, head of the Resettlement Section at the Office of the Governor of Warsaw, also referred to this project in his report on the Warsaw ghetto* made on January 20, 1941.

Schemes of this nature began to appear feasible after the fall of France in 1940, since this presented the Reich with the chance of using the French colonies in Africa as Jewish resettlement areas. This would, of course, require time and adequate preparation, and so the practical realization of this plan could only take place after the Nazis had won the war.

Although the actual way in which the Jews would be removed from Europe had not been established, the Reich authorities applied themselves to the "Jewish problem" in Poland almost from the first day of the occupation. On September 21, 1939, SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Office (RSHA) sent a circular letter (*Schnellbrief*) to the leaders of all the Security Police "action groups" (*Einsatzgruppen*) in which he told them that, regardless of the "ultimate purpose" which the Third Reich wished to attain through the solution of the Jewish problem, they would have to carry out certain preliminary stages of the plan which would lead to the required ends. Heydrich did not say what this "ultimate pur-

* Record of the proceedings in the case of J. Bühler at Nuremberg. Vol. 88 p. 265.

pose" was and what it involved. However, he stressed that the first basic task of the administrative authorities would be to concentrate all the Jews scattered over the occupied territories in larger urban centres. This ushered in the ghetto system. At first they were formed in small towns in the provinces; later the inhabitants would be moved to the largest town in each district. This was how the huge ghetto in Warsaw and a number of large ghettos in Cracow, Lublin, Częstochowa, etc., were created. In the areas annexed by the Reich, there was the large Łódź ghetto.

The formal basis for establishing ghettos, known officially as "Jewish Residential Districts," was provided by Frank's instructions of September 13, 1940, restricting free choice of place of residence and stay in the Government General. In practice, however, the first ghettos had been set up much earlier on the strength of regulations made by the local occupation authorities; for instance, in Piotrków a ghetto had been established in October 1939, and in Łowicz and several other small towns in the spring of 1940.*

At present there is not enough evidence to justify saying with complete certainty whether these projects to expel the Jews from Europe were seriously expected to be put into effect or whether they were merely used to camouflage an already existing plan for the total extermination of the Jews. It is probable that deportation was the original idea, though the organization of closed ghettos and the creation of living, residential and sanitary conditions in them that led to a massive mortality rate among their inhabitants, undoubtedly shows that the Nazi leaders tried by every means to eliminate the greatest possible number of Jews by "natural death."

The attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and Nazi suc-

* Dr. H. W. Schwender, the Kreishauptmann (County Chief) in Łowicz, by an order of May 7, 1940, set up ghettos in Łowicz and Głowno for Jews living in the Łowicz area.

cesses on the eastern front in the early stages of the war seem to a large degree to have influenced the taking of the decision on the "final solution of the Jewish problem."

On July 31, 1941, Göring wrote to Heydrich asking him to draw up a plan for the complete solution of the "Jewish problem" in Nazi-occupied areas. In January 1942, an interdepartmental conference was held in Berlin, at which Heydrich described a plan drawn up by him dealing with the future of about 11 million Jews in the whole of Europe, including countries yet to be occupied by the Nazis. The Jewish problem was to be solved by a gradual deportation of all Jews to the East. Not a single word was said about extermination. It seems beyond doubt, however, that the extermination of all Jews living in Nazi-ruled areas had already been decided. The only thing missing was a solution of the technical aspects of this problem.

What this deportation was to involve in practice and how the word itself actually meant extermination, was stated clearly in the affidavit of Rudolf Hoess, the former Commandant of Auschwitz, which he made during his examination in 1946 by the Cracow District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes. The relevant part of this lengthy testimony goes as follows:*

"In the summer of 1941 — I cannot give you the exact date now — I was suddenly summoned to Berlin to see the Reichsführer SS. Breaking his usual habit, Himmler told me the following without the assistance of an A.D.C.:

"The Führer has given the order for the final solution of the Jewish problem. We, the SS, are to carry out this order. The places of destruction in the East are not suitable for an action planned on a vast scale. Therefore, I have chosen Auschwitz for this purpose, both on account of its easy access by rail

* Record of the case of Rudolf Hoess. Vol. XXI, p. 160; *Wspomnienia Rudolfa Hoessa* (Memoirs of Rudolf Hoess), Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1956, p. 181; *Kommandant in Auschwitz — Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen von Rudolf Hoess*, p. 153.

and because it is situated in a region that can easily be isolated and concealed. My original intention was to entrust this job to one of the higher SS officers, but I have decided against this since I want to avoid the problems that would arise from the splitting up of powers. I am now handing this job over to you. It will be an arduous and difficult test for you, and will require your complete dedication without regard to whatever difficulties arise. You will be briefed on the details by Sturmbannführer Eichmann of the RSHA, who will be seeing you soon. The departments concerned will be informed by me in due time.

“‘You are to keep this order in the strictest secrecy even with respect to your superiors. As soon as you have talked with Eichmann, you are to send me the plans for the installations. The Jews are the age-old enemies of the German people and must be exterminated. All the Jews who fall into our hands will, without exception, be killed during this war. If we do not succeed now in destroying Jewry biologically, then the Jews will one day destroy the German people.’”

Sentence had now been passed on the Jews. In the autumn of 1941 the first extermination camps were set up; they had installations for the mass killing of human beings with carbon monoxide. These were the camps in Belżec and Chełmno. The same autumn Hoess built two provisional gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau, using Cyclone B for killing the victims. In the first half of 1942 camps were established in Sobibór, Treblinka, and Majdanek.

The Warsaw Ghetto

The first plans for a Jewish district in Warsaw had been drawn up in February 1940. This project, however, was withdrawn as a result of a different scheme proposed by SS Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the Higher SS and Police Leader in the East (*Höherer SS und Polizeiführer Ost*) in Cracow. Under this, there would be a single, large-scale concentration of Jews in the eastern part of the Government General in Lublin Province. This scheme, however, also fell through perhaps because of Himmler's plan to settle these lands with Germans in order to establish a closely-knit German bulwark in the East.

This revived the original scheme to set up a ghetto in Warsaw. It was planned to form two Jewish districts: one in the suburb of Praga on the right bank of the Vistula, the other in a suburb on the left bank. In the end, the area selected for the ghetto was the south-eastern part of the city on the left bank. This was the district inhabited by the majority of the Jewish community in Warsaw.

Preparations began in the summer of 1940; formally, the Jewish Residential District in Warsaw came into being on October 2, 1940, with the order of Ludwig Fischer, Governor of the Warsaw District.* On June 17, 1941, Fischer issued another

* *Amtsblatt des Chefs des Distrikts Warschau im Generalgouvernement*, No. 10/1940 p. 145.

order forbidding the Jews to leave the residential areas marked out for them within the District.* An order of November 10, 1941, made it a capital offence for a Jew to leave his residential district. Anyone found sheltering or assisting a Jew was liable to the same penalty.**

The whole preliminary action leading up to the creation of a "Jewish Residential District" in Warsaw was conducted with a staggering duplicity. The German propaganda machine launched a huge publicity campaign to impress the people of Warsaw with the Jews' alleged natural aversion to order, hygiene, etc. They were warned to keep away from large groupings of Jews because of the danger of lice and other insects, which spread disease, especially typhus.

It must be admitted that at that time there were in fact cases of typhoid fever; but they are to be attributed to the rapid deterioration in living conditions, food supplies and hygiene resulting from the occupation and, above all, from the influx of a large number of deportees from the area of Poland incorporated into the Reich. This state of affairs created an opportunity for making the south-eastern part of Warsaw, where the majority of the populace was formed by poor Jews, a shut-off area allegedly in quarantine.

The next step was a proposal to move the whole Jewish community to a separate district under the pretext of protecting the health of German troops. After the fall of France a great number of various Wehrmacht detachments were being sent to the East with a short stopover in Warsaw. Apart from this, the administration also showed its concern for the health of the Poles, putting this argument forward too as the reason why it was necessary to set up a separate residential district for the Jews.

* Ibid., No 7/1941 p. 65.

** *Amtsblatt des Chefs des Distrikts Warschau im Generalgouvernement*, No. 11/12/1944, p. 113.

Of course, these were merely pretexts. Not only were the measures taken by the occupation authorities not in line with modern methods of combating epidemics, but their fear of "infection" was also slightly exaggerated since they were soon to set up tailor shops in the ghetto which made uniforms for the Wehrmacht.

In his notorious report of the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto, SS Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop said that there were 400,000 Jews in it at the time of its creation. Dr. Schön, in the report mentioned in the previous chapter, placed the figure at 590,000 in the middle of January, 1941, adding that it was constantly rising as a result of the transfer of Jews from other towns in the Warsaw District, where the ghettos were being gradually liquidated.

Figures given by Schön tell of the fantastic overcrowding in the ghetto: 110,800 persons per sq. km. of built-up area, compared with 38,000 in the rest — or Aryan part — of Warsaw. There were about 27,000 apartments containing an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ rooms; this meant in the beginning about 15 persons per apartment, and this figure grew constantly.

The ghetto was cut off from the city by special walls screened with barbed wire. In the beginning there were 22 entrances but later these were reduced to 15. They were guarded by special police posts.

This brought to an end the first stage of the preparations for the as yet unspecified "solution of the Jewish problem."

Soon afterward Hitler took the decision on the "final solution." The fate of Jewry in the occupied countries was, of course, to be shared by those living in the Warsaw ghetto. For the moment, however, the Nazi authorities were unable to start the "deportation" campaign, since they first had to make ready the installations for mass extermination.

Meanwhile, conditions in the ghetto, packed to bursting point, isolated from the rest of the city and the whole outside world and deliberately undersupplied with food, were worsening

from day to day. The death rate shot up as a result of hunger and the diseases spread by the catastrophic hygienic and sanitary conditions. A relatively small number of the able-bodied managed to find jobs and a meagre livelihood in factories and workshops belonging to German concerns and usually engaged in military production. Some were taken outside the walls for forced labour. These had the chance of providing themselves with a small number of consumer goods in the so-called Aryan area. A small group of the more wealthy were able to afford the exorbitant expense of an adequate supply of food smuggled in from outside. But the vast majority hardly subsisted, and hunger took a massive toll. This deliberate starvation of the ghetto was at the time an indirect method of mass extermination. Its effectiveness can be judged from the 100,000 deaths in the ghetto up to the middle of 1942. The majority were victims of hunger.

The second half of 1942 saw the beginning of "deportations" to the East. The first action began on July 22 and lasted till October 3, 1942. It resulted in the "deportation" of 310,000 persons. There is a description of this action by Dr. Israel Milejowski, an eye-witness and victim of the second wave of "deportations."

"This was expulsion into the unknown of people driven from the streets and their homes, from cellars and attics, accompanied by the whistle of whips and the crackle of rifles.

"This was the loading into cattle cars of children torn from their parents, wives from their husbands — huge, congested groups left without water or bread in wild chaos and confusion; this huddled mass of humanity — the young and the old, the healthy and the hopelessly sick — were taken off on a journey to an unknown address never to return."*

* *Choroba Glodowa* (Famine), Warsaw, 1946, American Joint Distribution Committee, p. 11.

It was indeed a journey without return; but the destination was precisely specified: the extermination camp at Treblinka.

In a note dated July 19, 1942, Himmler had told the Higher SS and Police Leader in the Government General, Krüger, to have the "deportation" action finished in the Government General by December 31, 1942. When he arrived in Warsaw on a tour of inspection at the beginning of January 1943 and found that the ghetto still existed, he ordered it to be liquidated by February 15th and the factories and workshops in it together with their installations to be moved to Lublin.

This action was to be undertaken by the SS and Police Chief (*SS und Polizeiführer*) of the Warsaw District, von Sammern-Frankenegg. He launched it on January 18, but met with resistance on the part of the Jewish Fighter Organization and the workers of some of the factories. Several days later the action was wound up having achieved the paltry result of 6,500 deportations. Despite Himmler's order the ghetto was still standing. Its inhabitants numbering about 60,000, including a large number of youths and able-bodied workers, realized what was in store for them. They decided not to allow themselves to be taken away to certain death but rather to sell their lives dearly. Their decision was undoubtedly influenced by the relatively small though vigorously active Jewish Fighter Organization. After the January deportations, the members of this organization had carried out a number of successful attacks on informers and policemen, and this had raised the spirits of the ghetto populace.

Under these circumstances, the complete liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto became a serious problem. Fearing that this task would be too much for von Sammern-Frankenegg, Himmler entrusted it to SS Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop, the SS and Police Chief of Lvov, who had been specially posted to Warsaw.

The action to destroy the ghetto, known as *Grossaktion*, was begun on April 19, 1943, at 6 a. m. and was completed on May 16th at 8.15 p. m. On Stroop's orders daily reports on its prog-

ress were sent by teletype to Krüger in Cracow. When the ghetto had been finally destroyed Stroop ordered a general record of the "Great Action" to be prepared including in it copies of the daily reports (*Tägliche Meldungen*) and photographs (*Bildbericht*) taken during the fighting. All of these documents were bound in the form of an album and presented by Stroop to Himmler as a souvenir and testimonial to the faithful and conscientious execution of his orders. The title page of the album displays in ornate Gothic script this caption: The Jewish Residential District in Warsaw No Longer Exists! (*Es gibt keinen jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau mehr!*).

This unique record of genocide was used as material evidence in the Nuremberg Trial.* From its contents it is clear that a handful of organized and desperate ghetto inhabitants had determined to resist to the bitter end the barbaric plans and overwhelming strength of the Nazi supermen, and that they had rallied around them a large number of those of their fellow-victims who were capable of fighting. The majority of the remainder — those who were too weak to help the combatants — registered their protest by passive resistance to the orders of Stroop.

A few extracts from Stroop's daily reports show how bitter was the fighting within the ghetto walls.

"PROGRESS OF THE GHETTO ACTION ON APRIL 19, 1943**

"As soon as my units went into action, there was heavy, concerted firing from the Jews and bandits.*** A tank and two armoured cars that were brought up were pelted with Molotov cocktails (incendiary bottles). The tank was twice set on fire. Enemy fire at first forced the units to withdraw. Losses in the

* The original copy of Stroop's Report is to be found in the records of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

** This was the first day of the action.

*** Following Himmler's stardin orders, "bandits" was the name used to describe combatants in the resistance.

first attack numbered 12 (6 SS men and 6 guards from Trawniki).^{*} At about 0800 a second attack was mounted of units under the command of the undersigned (Stroop).

"In spite of lighter firing, again opened by the defenders, this attack succeeded in thoroughly clearing a group of buildings. The enemy was forced to withdraw from the roofs and its posts high up in the buildings to the cellars or to bunkers and sewers...

"A search party managed to capture barely 200 Jews. A detachment of storm troopers was sent in against the concealed bunkers with orders to clear out their occupants and destroy them. In this way about 380 Jews were captured. It was learnt that there were Jews in the sewers. They were flooded with water to prevent anyone from taking refuge there. At about 1730 we met very strong resistance and machine-gun fire in one group of buildings. A special detachment crushed this resistance and stormed these houses but was unable to capture the enemy. The Jews and criminals kept finding new strong-points which they would abandon at the last moment escaping through the attics or by underground passages. At about 2030 the outside guard-posts (those surrounding the ghetto) were reinforced. All units were withdrawn from the ghetto and dismissed to their quarters. The outside guard-posts were reinforced with 250 troops of the SS military formations."

"PROGRESS OF THE GHETTO ACTION ON APRIL 22, 1943

"A large number of Jews and bandits were buried underneath the rubble of buildings blown up by the sappers. In sev-

* The SS had set up a training camp in Trawniki, Lublin province, (*SS-Ausbildungslager Trawniki*). Here it trained volunteers from the occupied areas of central Eastern Europe (mainly Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Latvian nationalists). They were used as auxiliaries to the SS and police for such duties as guards and supervisors in camps, pacification of villages, liquidation of ghettos etc.

eral cases it was found necessary to set fire to the buildings in order to smoke out the bands.

"In addition, it has to be reported that since yesterday some of the units deployed in the action have been fired on from outside the ghetto — that is from the Aryan area.* The storm troopers who immediately counter-attacked managed in one case to capture 35 Polish bandits — Communists who were immediately liquidated. During the executions which we had to order today, it again happened that the bandits died shouting 'Long Live Poland,' 'Long Live Moscow.' "

"PROGRESS OF THE ACTION ON MAY 8, 1943.

"As was reported a few days ago, these subhuman bandits and terrorists are still hanging on in their bunkers though the heat of the flames is becoming unbearable. These creatures realize that they have only one choice — either to stay on in their hiding-places as long as they can or come out into the open and then try to wound or kill the troops of the SS military formations, police or Wehrmacht... The undersigned (Stroop) is determined not to wind up this action until the last Jew has been wiped out..."

"PROGRESS OF THE GREAT ACTION ON MAY 10, 1943.

"Today at 0900 a lorry drove up to the entrance to the sewers on Prosta Street. A man in the lorry threw two grenades, which was the signal for the bandits waiting there to emerge from the sewers. The Jews and bandits — there are still Polish bandits among them — who were armed with rifles, grenades and light machine-guns, got into the lorry and drove off in an unknown direction. The last man of this band who stood guard over the sewer and was detailed to close the manhole cover was captured. He provided the above information. He explained that the majority of the bands, divided into separate

* Attempts were made by combat groups of the Polish underground to bring help to those fighting in the Ghetto.

combat groups, had either been shot in the fighting or had taken their own lives because of the hopelessness of the struggle. No results are yet reported on the pursuit of the lorry..."

PROGRESS OF THE GREAT ACTION ON MAY 16, 1943.

"180 Jews, bandits and subhumans have been liquidated. The former Jewish Residential District in Warsaw no longer exists. The "Great Action" was concluded with the blowing up of the Warsaw Synagogue at 2015.

"The carrying out of other essential actions in the shut-off areas has been assigned, following detailed briefing, to the commander of the police battalion III/23.

"The total number of Jews either captured or definitely killed comes to 56,065..."

This brought the curtain down on the last act of the tragedy of the Warsaw ghetto. Those of its inhabitants who were not killed during the *Grossaktion* — mainly women, children and old men — were deported to the death camp at Treblinka (Treblinka II) and died in the gas chambers.

The whole area of the former ghetto was then thoroughly flattened. The few residential buildings and factories that had survived were blown up. A large district of Warsaw, which, before the war throbbed with the life of several hundred thousand people, had been turned into a dead, tangled heap of rubble.

Executions

A basic feature of the Nazi occupation regime in Poland was the total terror, undisguised in its methods, which invaded every field of life and embraced the whole population, without regard to age or sex. Like all regimes of terror, it operated outside the law, though attempts were often made to give its methods an appearance of legality. Among the harshest and most frequent instruments used, were the so-called executions. These were far from being "executions" in the legal sense of the word, that is the carrying out of a sentence duly passed by a court of law. Under the occupation executions were the euphemism given to the arbitrary murder of innocent civilians. They were not the result of a due process of law and a legitimate sentence, even in those cases where they were dressed up in a cloak of legality.

Executions of Poles began with the first days of the war in 1939. While the military campaign was still on, they were carried out by the Wehrmacht — for example, the mass shooting of Poles in Bydgoszcz on September 7, 1939 — or by the "operational groups" (*Einsatzgruppen*, *Einsatzkommandos*) made up of members of the Gestapo or Security Police which followed just behind the regular troops. The job of these groups was to purge the occupied territories of "hostile elements," among whom the occupation authorities listed political and civic leaders, members of the intelligentsia, teachers, priests, landowners, etc. All this action involved primarily the western regions of Poland.

In this early period, the "action groups" received vigorous support from the *Selbstschutz*, an organization something like the Home Guard. It was made up of Germans living in Poland and possessing Polish citizenship, and led by specially detailed SS officers. The majority of Germans in Poland had belonged to underground organizations before the war and had undergone secret military training. They had almost certainly become part of the fifth column.

In the first weeks of the war thousands of Polish civilians who had taken no part in the fighting at the front were killed as a result of criminal activity by the Wehrmacht, the "action groups" and the *Selbstschutz*. When military operations were over, the job of searching out "political offenders" and "enemies of the Third Reich" was taken over by the Gestapo.

In the first months of the occupation this action was particularly widespread in the western parts of Poland annexed by the Reich on the strength of Hitler's decree of October 8, 1939. Arrests numbered thousands. The prisons were so overcrowded that for the time being the authorities had to set up "Civilian Internment Camps" (*Zivilinterniertenlager*) and transit camps (*Durchgangslager*). For the prisoners these were indeed transit camps — but in a very tragic sense. The next stop for most of them was death either by execution on the orders of the Reich Main Security Office or from "natural" causes as a result of the appalling living conditions, inhuman treatment and disease. The largest and most notorious camps of this type were in Poznań ("Fort VII") and Działdowo. In the latter camp, which under various names survived till the end of the occupation, large numbers of secular and monastic Catholic clergy were murdered at the beginning of 1940. By 1941, of the 120 priests who had been detained there the only survivors were the 83-year-old Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski, the Bishop of Płock, and his Suffragan, Bishop Leon Wetmański. Despite persistent efforts by his family to have the archbishop released, including an appeal to the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, he was kept

on in the camp and eventually died there in May 1941. Bishop Wetmański, transferred to a branch camp in Stutthof, died in 1942.

Many teachers and priests were murdered in the course of mass executions carried out in Pomerania during the early months of the occupation.

Between 1939 and the middle of 1941 several thousand persons perished as a result of mass executions in Warsaw. At first these were carried out in the gardens of the Seym and then in the University grounds; from the middle of December 1939 onwards the victims were taken outside the town and shot in the neighbouring woods. Most of the executions took place in the Kampinowskie woods near the village of Palmiry, about 30 kilometres from Warsaw.

Beyond the little village of Palmiry, a little to the south of the asphalt road leading from Warsaw to Modlin, there is an expanse of sandy ground covered with fir trees. It was here, several kilometres from the nearest habitation, that an artillery dump had been set up before the war belonging to the old fortress in Modlin. This dump was dismantled by the Germans right at the beginning of the occupation. Even the railway tracks of the siding leading to it were removed.

This desolate spot among the woods was selected by the Gestapo in Warsaw as an execution site. A clearing in the wood was enlarged by cutting down the trees around it. Before each execution a pit of the required size was dug in the sandy ground. usually in the form of a ditch about 3 metres deep. The victims were brought from Warsaw by lorry. They were taken from the Pawiak prison which the Gestapo had used since the beginning of 1940 to detain all its "political prisoners." The prisoners never realized that they were being taken on their last journey. The Nazis did everything to preserve their illusions. The victims were allowed to take small parcels with them, and often their papers and personal belongings deposited in the prison were returned to them. They were also permitted

Die Bildung jüdischer Wohnbezirke und die Auferlegung von Aufenthalt- und Arbeitsbeschränkungen für die Juden sind in der Geschichte des Ostens nicht neu. Ihre Anfänge gehen weit bis ins Mittelalter zurück und waren auch noch im Verlaufe der letzten Jahrhunderte immer wieder zu beobachten. Diese Beschränkungen erfolgten aus dem Gesichtspunkte, die arische Bevölkerung vor den Juden zu schützen.

Aus den gleichen Erwägungen wurde bereits im Februar 1940 der Gedanke der Bildung eines jüdischen Wohnbezirks in Warschau aufgegriffen. Es war zunächst geplant, den durch die Michael Götlich abgegrenzten Stadtteil Warschau zum jüdischen Wohnbezirk zu machen. Bei den besonders ungünstigen Verhältnissen der Stadt Warschau musste dieser Gedanke zunächst als undurchführbar angesehen werden. Auch wurde von diesem Plan von verschiedenen Seiten, insbesondere von der Stadtverwaltung, Abstand genommen. Man berief sich insbesondere darauf, daß die Errichtung eines jüdischen Wohnbezirks erhebliche Störungen in der Industrie und Wirtschaft hervorrufen würde und daß eine Ansammlung der in einem geschlossenen Wohnbezirk zusammengefaßten Juden nicht möglich sei.

Auf Grund einer im März 1940 erfolgten Besprechung wurde der Plan einer Ghettoisierung mit Rücksicht auf die vorgetragenen Bedenken vorerst zurückgestellt. Zur gleichen Zeit wurde der Gedanke erwogen, den Distrikt Lublin zum Sammelbezirk aller Juden des Generalgouvernements, insbesondere der aus dem Reich eintreffenden evakuierten Juden und Judenpflichtlinge, zu erklären. Über schon im April 1940 wurde vom Stabschef u. Polizeiführer Ost, Krakau, mitgeteilt, daß eine solche Zusammenfassung der Juden im Distrikt Lublin nicht beabsichtigt sei.

In der Zwischenzeit blieben die eigenmächtigen und unberechtigten Greuelverbrechen an den Juden, insbesondere an den an der Grenze der Krainstammeschaften Lwowitz und Chelmizewice festgestellten

ersten Zeit gegen das arische Wohngebiet fest abgeriegelt sein und bewacht werden. Zu diesem Zwecke ist das Polizei-Bataillon III/23 eingesetzt. Dieses Polizeibataillon hat den Auftrag, den ehemaligen jüdischen Wohnbezirk zu überwachen, insbesondere darauf zu achten, daß niemand in das ehemalige Ghetto hineinkommt und jemand, der sich unberechtigt darin aufhält, sofort zu erschießen. Der Kommandeur des Polizei-Bataillons erhält laufend weitere Anweisungen unmittelbar vom u. und Polizeiführer. Es muß auf diese Weise erreicht werden, die evtl. noch vorhandenen kleinen Überreste der Juden unter ständiger Druck zu halten und zu vernichten. Durch Vernichtung aller Gebäude und Schlupfwinkel und durch Abtreibung des Jassers muß den noch verbliebenen Juden und Banditen jede weitere Daseinsmöglichkeit genommen werden.

Es wird vorgeschlagen, das Dzielno-Gefängnis zu einem KL zu machen und durch die Häftlinge die Millionen von Decksteinen, den Eisenschrott und andere Materialien auszubauen, zu sammeln und der Verwertung zuzuführen.

Warschau, den 16. Mai 1943.

Der u. und Polizeiführer
im Distrikt Warschau


u. und Polizeiführer
u. Generalmajor der Polizei.

First page of "Stroop's Report" about the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. The last page with Stroop's signature



German caption: *Mit Gewalt aus Bunkern herausgeholt* (Pulled out of their hiding-places by force)

German caption: *Diese Banditen verteidigten sich mit der Waffe* (These bandits offered armed resistance)





German caption: *Die Banditen entziehen sich der Festnahme durch Absprung*
(Bandits avoiding capture by jumping)

German caption: *Ein Stosstrupp* (An advance unit)



A b s c h r i f t .

F e r n s c h r e i b e n

Abenderr Der H- und Polizeiführer im Distrikt Warschau

Warschau, den 16. Mai 1943

Az.: I ab - St/Gr. - 1607 Tgb.Nr. 652/43 geh.

Betr.: Ghetto-Großaktion.

An den

Höheren H- und Polizeiführer Ost
H-Obergruppenführer und General d. Polizei Krüger
o.V.i.A.

K r a k a u

Verlauf der Großaktion am 16.5.43, Beginn 10.00 Uhr:

Es wurden 180 Juden, Banditen und Untermenschen vernichtet.
Das ehemalige jüdische Wohnviertel Warschau besteht nicht
mehr. Mit der Sprengung der Warschauer Synagoge wurde die
Großaktion am 20.15 Uhr beendet.

Die für die errichteten Sperrgebiete weiter zu treffenden Maß-
nahmen sind dem Kommandeur des Pol.-Batl. III/23 nach eingehen-
der Einweisung übertragen.

Gesamtzahl der erfaßten und nachweislich vernichteten Juden be-
trägt insgesamt 56 065.

Keine eigenen Verluste.

Schlußbericht lege ich am 18.5.43 bei der H- und Polizeiführer-
tagung vor.

Der H- und Polizeiführer
im Distrikt Warschau

gez. Stroop

H-Brigadeführer
u. Generalmajor d. Polizei

P.d.R.

J. in

H-Stabschef.

Stroop's last report about the conclusion of the "big action" in the Ghetto

to take food parcels sent from home and were even issued with a ration of bread "for the road."

All these preliminaries allayed any suspicions or misgivings the prisoners might have had. This is quite understandable. Although they had been interrogated by the Gestapo, who had accused them of various things, usually regarding with their pre-war activities, no court had passed any sentence on them. In these conditions the prisoners, making allowances for the ruthlessness of German methods, presumed that they were being taken to concentration camps.

The transports were usually taken from the prison in the early morning. The Polish staff was kept away from this action, and working prisoners were not allowed out of their cells or were pulled out of their working parties. Eventually the Polish prison staff and the prisoners who had spent any length of time in Pawiak were able to tell by these signs which transports were being taken away for execution.

In the prison registers the names of these who had been taken off for execution were marked with a "T" — for transport, without any indication given that they had been murdered.

The lorries taking the prisoners were accompanied by a heavy escort. Near Palmiry they turned off the highway, and a few kilometres down the side road they stopped near the clearing in which graves had already been dug. The prisoners were unloaded and blindfolded. They had to leave their baggage in the lorries, but their clothing and personal belongings were not removed. Presumably the Germans had not yet been struck by the practical advantages of killing their victims naked or at best in clothing made of paper tissue, as they did later, and confiscating their belongings and clothes for the "Great Reich." The blindfolded victims were led into the clearing. There they were lined up on the edge of the pit and machine-gunned. If there was a greater number to be executed the victims were split into groups.

After the war the mass graves in the Palmiry woods were

dug up by the Polish Red Cross and the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. Approximately 800 bodies were found, of which about 170 were those of women. Scraps of personal papers and other distinguishing marks made it possible to identify about 400 of them.

The biggest execution in Palmiry took place on June 20–21, 1940, during the “AB Action” (*aussenordentliche Befriedungsaktion* – “Extraordinary Pacification Action”) launched by Governor General Frank to decimate the Polish intelligentsia. 358 persons, including about 60 women, were shot. The victims were brought to the spot in groups of over a hundred. Thanks to members of the underground movement among the prison staff, who at times managed to get copies of the lists sent to the prison by the Gestapo of those who were to be executed, it was possible to establish the identity of the prisoners in these transports.

The discovery of many of these mass graves was made possible by the assistance of workers in the forestry service who had secretly watched the executions and marked in various ways the place where the victims were buried. Attempts had been made by the Germans to conceal these graves. They were made level with the ground and rolled, and by the end of the war they had grown over with grass, shrubs and bushes. For this reason there can be no certainty that all the graves have been discovered and dug up.

Among the identified bodies were those of Maciej Rataj, a former Marshal of the Sejm; the Socialist leader and editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Robotnik* (The Worker), Mieczysław Niedziałkowski; Stefan Kopeć, a biologist, and Kazimierz Zakrzewski, a historian, both professors at the University of Warsaw; Janusz Kusociński, an Olympic gold medallist at Los Angeles, and many other well-known figures.

Often the murder of these innocent civilians was given a veneer of legality. For this purpose the administration of the Government General introduced summary police courts. On

October 31, 1939, Governor General Frank issued an action on combating acts of violence in the Government General (*Verordnung zur Bekämpfung von Gewalttaten im Generalgouvernement*)* which made any such acts against the German authorities or German individuals, or any incitement to violation of the administration's orders, a capital offence. It has to be added that orders issued by the Army General Staff on September 1939, which had introduced the death penalty for possessing arms and ammunition, were still kept in force. Cases involving any of these offences of a "political" character were handed over to the summary police courts. These courts could be convened as need arose and were made up of a police unit commander, a battalion commander or the commander of one of the Gestapo's *Einsatzkommandos* ("Action Commandos") plus two officials from the department concerned.

This order made no provision for the conduct of an investigation to determine guilt. All that was needed to pass sentence was the evidence of one witness. The accused had no opportunity to defend himself. The procedural rules in these courts required only the recording of the names of the judges and accused, the evidence on which the sentence was based, the offence, and the date of execution.

On October 2, 1943, Frank issued an order on combating sabotage of German reconstruction work in the Government General (*Verordnung zur Bekämpfung von Angriffen gegen das deutsche Aufbauwerk im Generalgouvernement*)** which considerably extended the range of "political" crimes that were capital offences. These now included any infringements of the laws, regulations and ordinances of the authorities, committed with intent to damage or obstruct "German reconstruction work." "Offences" in this category came under the jurisdiction

* *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*, 1939, p. 9.

** *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement*, 1943, p. 589.

of the summary courts run by the Security Police and Security Service, in other words, the Gestapo. The same procedure was to be followed as in the summary police courts.

It needs hardly be said that these police courts bore no resemblance to a legitimate court of law or the principles of law; on the contrary, they violated these principles in every respect. Sentence was passed without any prior investigation and without the slightest attempt at objective appraisal of the evidence. The laws of procedure did not even admit the obligation to allow the prisoner to appear before this pseudo-court in person, even to hear sentence passed. It is typical that the word used in the order is invariably the "condemned" and not the "defendant." From this it is obvious that the "court" would inevitably sentence anyone whom it tried. But there were often cases when even this travesty of court procedure was omitted. Notices were simply posted in towns and villages with the names of persons who had been shot saying that "the sentence of the court" had been carried out.

The execution of arrested "political offenders," who often had to spend some length of time in prison, was designed as a preventive measure. On the one hand, the object was to destroy that section of Polish society which, in the eyes of the authorities, constituted a potential danger to Nazism, since they were potential organizers of a resistance movement, that is, political and civic leaders and the intelligentsia in general. On the other hand, the Germans hoped to terrorize the Poles into abandoning any attempts at starting a resistance movement.

The scale of the terror practised in the Government General is best conveyed by a statement made by Governor General Hans Frank in a lengthy interview given to Kleiss, the correspondent of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, on February 6, 1940. The interview took place in Frank's residence on Wawel Hill, in Cracow, over a glass of wine. One of the questions asked by Kleiss was whether it might not be worth studying the difference between the Protectorate of Czechoslovakia and Moravia

and the Government General. "I can give you a vivid illustration of the difference," Frank replied. "In Prague large red notices were posted to inform everyone that 7 Czechs had been shot. At the time I said to myself: If I wanted to have notices posted to announce every shooting of 7 Poles, there would not be enough forests in Poland to produce the paper for these posters."*

The "AB Action," which was intended to eliminate the "leading section" among the Poles, was the subject of a meeting devoted to police questions that was held on Wawel Hill in Cracow on May 30, 1940. At this meeting Frank said: "While the lives of thousands of men of the finest German blood are, every minute and every second, being sacrificed in the West, we as National Socialists have a duty to make sure that the Polish nation does not by chance reassert itself at the expense of these German victims. This is a suitable occasion to discuss, in the presence of SS Obergruppenführer Krüger and comrade Streckenbach, our Extraordinary Pacification Plan (*ausserordentliches Befriedungsprogramm*) which envisages a more rapid liquidation of members of the resistance movement and other politically suspect individuals now in our hands, and measures for dealing with the legacy of the old Polish criminal instinct. I openly admit that many thousands of Poles will pay with their lives, particularly the most notable representatives of the intelligentsia. However, a burden has been placed on the shoulders of all of us, as National Socialists, to prevent the Polish nation from ever again offering any resistance. I realize the responsibility that we are taking on ourselves. It is, however, obvious that we must do this, precisely because of the need to defend the eastern flank of the Reich. In addition, SS Obergruppenführer Krüger and I have decided that the pacification action (*Befriedungsaktion*) is to be carried out posthaste.

* Frank's Diary, Working Sessions and Addresses, vol. IX p. 440.

I would like to ask all of you to help us with all your energy to carry out this task..."*

One of the results of the "AB Action" was the aforementioned mass execution in Palmiry on June 20–21.

A second type of frequent executions were those carried out as reprisals. The main sufferers were civilians who were shot for various kinds of "political" offences, when the actual culprits could not be found. Applying the principle of collective responsibility on a wide scale, the authorities executed persons selected at random from among the local inhabitants of the place where the "offence" had been committed or from among the residents in the vicinity. Quite often the authorities arrested prominent members of a particular locality as hostages and shot them if any "political" offence was committed in the area.

In all these reprisals those who were shot were almost always innocent; not only had they had nothing to do with the actual "offence" but often were not even involved with the group that committed it.

One of the first such executions was the shooting on December 27, 1939, of 107 people from Wawer near Warsaw in reprisal for the killing of two non-commissioned officers from the 538th Construction Battalion (*Baubataillon*) stationed in Wawer. These soldiers had been killed by two criminals, known in the area, who on December 26, 1939, had shot a Polish policeman several kilometres from Otwock and fled. The Polish police station in Wawer had been informed by telephone that the thugs were probably in the area and had asked local German headquarters for help in capturing these dangerous criminals. The two German soldiers had been shot on the evening of December 27th in a small café when without taking any precautions they had asked the gunmen for their papers.

The circumstances of the killing were well known to the German authorities; the two criminals had been identified; and

* Frank's Diary, Working Sessions, 1940, vol. IX.

there was absolutely no political implication to the crime. Nevertheless, a unit of the 31st corps of military police (*Ordnungspolizei*) arrived from Warsaw, which shot in reprisal 106 people and hanged one from Wawer and nearby Anin. The execution was preceded by a "sentence" handed down by a specially summoned summary police court. The chairman of the court was the commander of the VI battalion of the police corps, Friedrich Wilhelm Wenzel. One of the judges in the trial was Lt. Colonel Max Daume deputizing for the corps commander who was out of Warsaw. Both these officers were extradited to Poland after the war and sentenced to death. Daume was tried in 1947 by the Supreme National Tribunal in Warsaw, Wenzel in 1950 by the Appellate Court in Warsaw. Both these trials exposed the viciousness and hypocrisy of the summary police courts. Josef Meisinger, head of the Security Police and Security Service (*Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und SD*) for the District of Warsaw, who was tried with Max Daume, admitted that these courts, which functioned without a prosecutor, without any investigation of guilt, and without any opportunity for the accused to defend himself, were not really courts of law even though they were called such.

Wawer was the first, but by no means the last mass execution. The terror grew from day to day, while the repressions not only failed to crush the spirit of opposition but, on the contrary, intensified the universal hatred of the Nazi occupation authorities and helped to create and strengthen an organized resistance movement.

The repressions were no less ruthless and brutal in the countryside, where they often took on the appearance of a mass slaughter of innocent persons. As an example, there was the huge retaliatory massacre on April 13, 1940, in the village of Józefów, near Łuków, in the province of Lublin. The description of this atrocity is based on the records of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

On April 12, 1940, in the late evening, armed bandits raided

the house of Adolf Kastner, a local settler of German origin, in the village of Józefów. They murdered his whole family of five (the parents and three children) and, after having taken all valuables, vanished. It must be added that robbery with violence was a fairly frequent occurrence in the early days of the occupation. The explanation for this is that as a result of the fighting in September 1939 and the rapid advance of the Germans a large number of criminals serving long sentences found themselves at liberty.

A report of the crime was phoned the next day to Captain Franciszek Dobromirski, head of the Polish police for the County of Łuków. At about noon he went off in a lorry, put at his disposal by the local German police, to Józefów. In testimony given to the local court in Łuków on October 9, 1945, Dobromirski said that on arrival in Józefów he found a large body of German police and a number of officers, led by Count von Alvensleben, the deputy head of the Gestapo for the Lublin District.* The latter sharply criticized Dobromirski, claiming that a chauvinistically minded population was murdering Germans. Dobromirski explained to him that the killing of the Kastner family had no political background as could be seen from the fact of robbery. He also pointed out that there had recently been quite a number of robberies involving killings since the area was the haunt of a gang of habitual criminals whose names were known to him. He gave Alvensleben the names of the leader and his gang. He produced several more arguments to show that the crime was a routine case of armed robbery. His efforts, however, were of no avail. Alvensleben could not, or rather would not, be persuaded. On his orders the German policemen drove everyone from the neighbouring houses into a field near the Kastner farm. Eventually the wom-

* The witness was mistaken, since Rudolf von Alvensleben, was at the same time chief of the *Selbstschutz* for the Lublin District; the witness' confusion is understandable.

en and children were released and told to go back to their homes. Meanwhile the men were still being herded into the field. Captain Dobromirski realized, of course, that the Germans were intending to take some form of extreme reprisal on these innocent persons. Once again he tried to tell Alvensleben where he should look for the real criminals. The only effect this had was that Alvensleben stopped the Germans from bringing any more persons into the field.

What followed is taken direct from the testimony given by Dobromirski:*

"Just before dusk, when the men were already lined up in a square in the clover field and surrounded by a cordon of SS men, two heavy machine guns were mounted behind the square at a distance of about thirty paces and opened fire. The rear ranks were felled by the hail of bullets, there were cries and screams for help. As they tumbled over, the men at the back forced the ranks in front of them forward by the weight of their falling bodies. The men in front, still unhit by the bullets, rushed forward into the open field in the direction of Chor-dzieżka, assisted by the fact that the Nazi guards had moved to one side as soon as the massacre began. When the victims started to flee — dusk had already fallen — the Nazis standing to one side began to chase the runaways and shoot at them; in the meantime the officer in charge had given orders to the machine-gunners to hold their fire, and the guards surrounded those who were still unhurt or not yet dead. They were then finished off with small arms, mainly pistols...

"As far as I remember, when I asked the commandant of the station in confidence to give me the number of victims the figure was more than 200. The wounded who managed to escape and who subsequently attended to themselves in hiding, came to about 100..."

* Records of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland 649 z/OL — inw. 678.

Later Dobromirski testified that within three weeks of the killing of the Kastner family the Polish police had traced the three bandits who took part in the robbery, arrested them and even recovered some of the stolen property.

From this account it is obvious that the Germans were not concerned with avenging the murder of the Kastner family, they merely took the opportunity that had presented itself to slaughter a large number of Poles and terrorize the population.

Another witness, Małgorzata Kalinowska, a teacher and wife of Józef Kalinowski, the local school principal, who was one of the victims of this massacre, gave an almost identical account of the episode. She added:

"I was forbidden even to take the body of my husband who was buried in a common grave, or to exhume it later. The common grave was ploughed over and levelled."

After the liberation, 170 of the victims of this execution were identified. They had come from six villages and ten tiny hamlets. Among them was a young woman who had refused to leave her husband. Among the men nineteen were from 14 to 17 years old, ten were between the ages of 65 and 70 and one was over 80.

An inventory made on February 9, 1945, by the Community People's Council of Serokomla, within whose jurisdiction Józefów falls, showed that on the day of the execution the German police had burned 27 of the nearest farmsteads, belonging to the victims together with their livestock, hay, fodder, carts, harness, implements, etc. Nothing was allowed to be taken out of these houses; all the effects of the victims and their families were burned — clothing, footwear, sheets, furniture, etc. From some of the farms that were not set on fire the Germans removed the carts and horses, cattle, implements and even some of the personal belongings. The German authorities made no attempt even to dress up the execution with the trappings of legality. A report on this incident sent by Seyss-Inquart,

Frank's deputy, to Himmler,* indicated that the Józefów massacre had been carried out in agreement with, and endorsed by the highest administrative and police organs in the Government General, but without the previous farce of a court trial, as with the execution in Wawer.

It is worth adding that penal regulations introduced by the occupation authorities provided extremely severe penalties, usually death, for even the slightest "political offence." But even taking these regulations as a standard of legality, additional penalties in the form of destruction and confiscation of the property of the "political offender" had no legal justification. As a general rule, this additional punishment was imposed in the countryside by the authorities together with the retaliatory executions.

As has already been mentioned, these brutal and illegal repressions, accompanied by an extensive application of the principle of collective responsibility, only served to fan a spontaneous hatred of the Nazis and encouraged the growth of an organized resistance movement. This in turn made the Nazis intensify the reprisals, which reached their peak of ferocity in the Government General between autumn 1943 and autumn 1944. In the countryside, villagers were shot for sheltering or assisting the partisans, in the towns there were reprisals for acts of terror carried out by the organized resistance movement on members of the administration who had particularly "distinguished" records.

During this period the authorities introduced in Warsaw what they called public executions; the formal basis for them was provided by Frank's order of October 2, 1943, on combating sabotage of German reconstruction work. This order went into force on October 10. At a meeting held in Wawel Castle in Cracow on October 19, 1943, at which the state of security in

* Report on May 5, 1940 — Document 527 in the Main Commission records.

the Government General was discussed, Frank said that this order had "given the Security Police extraordinary powers which would do away with all restrictions of a formal nature."*

These "extraordinary powers" consisted in practice of organizing huge round-ups in the city and shooting the people caught in them. With the removal of "restrictions of a formal nature" the Security police was given carte blanche to execute all captured "offenders" without having to carry out any preliminary investigations to establish the guilt of those accused of some offence. Although the public notices of executions stated that the persons who had been shot had been sentenced to death by the Summary Court of the Security Police (*Standgericht der Sicherheitspolizei*), it may be presumed that, in practice, they did not even bother to go through with this farce.

The notices of public executions fairly frequently included the names not only of those who had been shot but also the names of persons sentenced to death by the summary police courts, but "due to be reprieved." In practice, this reprieve was never granted and these "offenders" apparently awaiting reprieve usually figured in the next notices as having been executed. Probably the single exception to this was the case of four Poles who escaped death purely by accident. One of them was Dr. Stanisław Arnold, a Warsaw professor. He was a witness at the trial of the former Governor of the Warsaw District, Ludwig Fischer, and others, held in December 1946 and January 1947 before the Supreme National Tribunal in Warsaw.**

Professor Arnold told the court how on December 7, 1943, the tram in which he was travelling was suddenly stopped by a large detachment of SS and police. From among the passengers over twenty men between the ages of 18 and 60 were detained, including himself. All those who had been arrested

* Frank's Diary, 1943, vol. V, p. 10—35.

** Transcript of the main proceedings of January 7, 1947 (Main Commission, 248 z/V, pp. 1070 ff.)

were loaded into a large police van and taken to Pawiak prison. Here the personal details of the prisoners were recorded, all their money and effects taken, leaving them only their handkerchiefs, and they were put in a common cell. The same evening the prisoners were interrogated. They were taken by fives to the former prison chapel where there were several Gestapo officers with their interpreters grouped round tables. The officers questioned each of the prisoners in turn. Arnold while awaiting his turn, made a careful observation of the manner in which the man in front of him was being interrogated. He was a young man who did not understand German. The officer asked him his full name, date of birth and address. Then he was asked if he belonged to a "partisan gang," as the officer called it, or to any other grouping fighting the Germans. The answer was in the negative. The officer then typed something on a piece of paper. The interpreter read out from this card, in Polish, a statement which agreed with the answers that had been given by the young man. He was ordered to sign the paper and with that the interrogation concluded. Professor Arnold who had gone up to the table after the young man's departure saw the interpreter take a large mimeographed sheet of paper and attach the card that had just been signed by the Pole to it. Standing right next to the table Professor Arnold could read what was written in German in the statement signed by the young man. It was quite different from what the boy had said and from the Polish translation given by the interpreter. The statement on the sheet said that the prisoner had admitted that he belonged to a partisan gang. The mimeographed sheet contained the sentence of a police court condemning the Pole to death on the basis of his own confession to the commission of a crime. Arnold, who now realized the extreme danger of his position, described what then happened:

"Eventually my turn came. It so happened that during the questioning the officer realized that I understood German and I began answering the questions put by the interpreter directly

in German. So with me they had to use different tactic. I was asked what I was doing in Warsaw. I was a teacher, I said, and had been posted to one of the primary shools. He seemed surprised that the date on my identity card (*Kennkarte*) was comparatively recent. I told him that I had been in Vilna and just come to Warsaw. This concluded the questioning. He then wrote something on a sheet which I could not see, laid it on the table, covered it with a white piece of paper, and told me to sign. I pushed it back. He drew his revolver and shouted: 'What! You don't trust the honour of a German officer?' It was difficult for me to trust it. I told him that I wanted to see what I was signing. In fact, it turned out there was nothing in it that could do me any harm, except that between the text and the signature — he showed me where I was to sign — four or five centimetres had been left blank. I scrawled all over this blank space and this provoked another outburst. Then I signed and the interpreter told me: 'Everything will be alright; you'll be released tomorrow, only you will have to leave Warsaw and go back to Vilna...

"It so happened that, quite unexpectedly, a few days later in the afternoon of December 15, the door opened and an officer announced that I was free. At the gate I met some of my companions who had been arrested with me and put in different cells. We were taken to the store where our things were returned. Then we went to the office where there was a high-ranking Gestapo officer who made a lengthy speech telling us the danger we had been in. He showed us a poster on which our names had been printed on December 10. My companions' names were also there. He announced that we had been released thanks to the intervention of persons who could be trusted. But if we were ever to reappear no power on earth would get us out. This was the manner of my release."

Later in his further testimony, in answering questions put by the court and the public prosecutor, Professor Arnold declared that he had witnessed the unmistakable falsification of a writ-

ten statement by an SS officer. He added that he had asked all his cellmates, of whom there were about forty, what questions had been put to them during their interrogation and what they had signed. They all stated that the interpreter had read out in Polish the written statement, which they had then signed without reading. All of them were relieved that the statement translated into Polish had been a faithful version of what they had said. They did not suspect that they had been tricked. Professor Arnold supposed that the other three persons had been freed so that his release would not be the only one.

This testimony fully confirms the suspicion that the police authorities did not consider it necessary to preserve even the external appearances of legal procedure for the benefit of their victims. They were only concerned with the records of the summary court being in order from a formal point of view. On this question, a very precise account could have been given by SS Obersturmbannführer Ludwig Hahn, head of the Security Police and Security Service (*Der Kommandeur der Sicherheits-polizei und SD*) for the Warsaw District, whose signature appeared on many of the execution notices. Unfortunately Poland was unable to secure the extradition of Hahn who after the war went into hiding in West Germany.

The public was informed of Frank's order of October 2, 1943, through loudspeakers placed in the streets of Warsaw. To this was added a brief rider that on the strength of the extraordinary powers given to them the police had the right to shoot any passer-by who seemed to them suspicious.

A few days after this order went into effect, Warsaw became the scene of round-ups on an enormous scale. Large canvas-covered police lorries, called "coops" by the Varsovians, would suddenly appear in various parts of the city. Streets or areas would be sealed off with heavy cordons of police, and all men, not only in the streets but also in trams or shops, would be loaded into the lorries. In these round-ups the police and SS

were assisted by units of the Wehrmacht and even the Luftwaffe.

Immediately following the first round-up an announcement was broadcast over the loudspeakers from the SS and Police Chief of the Warsaw District, SS Brigadeführer Franz Kutschera, that in reprisal for recent attempts made on the lives of Germans a certain number of hostages had been taken from among the Polish population, and that if there were any further attempts these hostages would be shot on the same day and in the same place as the killing took place. The names of the hostages were read out with the information that for every German attacked ten Poles would be shot. The announcement concluded with an appeal to the Poles to assist in the capture of those responsible for these attempts in return for which some of the hostages would be reprieved. Almost every day there were announcements of lists of hostages and "criminals" sentenced to death by the summary courts, but "due to be reprieved." Most of them were passers-by caught in the round-ups. Eventually the Germans stopped making announcements by loudspeaker and instead began printing notices of executions on red paper with a characteristically light violet tinge.

On October 16, 1943, the first execution in the streets of Warsaw was held, in which 25 persons were shot. After this there were executions every few days. A list drawn up by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland,* based on authentic but fragmentary German sources, showed that between October 16, 1943, and February 15, 1944, there were 33 street executions in Warsaw in which 1,528 innocent persons, most of them picked up at random in round-ups, were shot. It has to be added that this list does not take into account executions carried out during this period in the

* Dr. Stanisław Płoski and Dr. Ewa Śliwińska: *Miejsce masowych egzekucji w Warszawie w latach 1939-1944* (Sites of Mass Executions in Warsaw, 1939-1944), Bulletin of the Main Commission, vol. VI, pp. 86 ff.

Berlin, den 16. Juni 1945.

Vermittlung.

Es erscheint SS-Brigadeführer

Dr. Dr. Otto Rasch.

geb. am 12.11.1891 in Friedrichshagen, wohnhaft Berlin-
Dahlem, Charlottenburg, Söndeburger Allee 23, und erklärt folgendes:

Ich bin von November 1939 bis November 1941
Inspektor der Sicherheitspolizei und der SD in Königsberg
gewesen. Als ich die Dienststelle übernahm, fand ich dort
einen größeren Kreis politischer Häftlinge vor, die im
wesentlichen aus Festnahmen durch die Einsatzkommandos
der West- und Ostfront bestanden. Diese Häftlinge lagen verstreut
in mehreren Lagern und wurden zur Abwicklung der gesamten
Angelegenheit von mir bzw. über die Staatspolizeistellen
einzeln überprüft. Dabei stellte sich heraus, daß ein
Teil entlassen werden konnte, während ein Teil der
Verbringung ins Konzentrationslager beauftragt werden mußte
und ein letzter Teil, der aus politischen Aktivitäten
politischer Bewegungen bestand, zu liquidieren
war. Ich trug diesen Sachverhalt damals dem Chef der
Sicherheitspolizei, SS-Gruppenführer Heydrich, vor, der
sich einverstanden erklärte, aber zur Bedingung machte, daß die
Liquidation unauffällig vor sich gehen müsse.

Das Durchgangslager sollte wurde vor mir im
Winter 1939/40 zunächst eigens zu bewerkstelligt, die
notwendig werdenden Liquidationen unauffällig zu bewerk-
stelligen. Die Betroffenen wurden daher sämtlich in dieses Lager
übergeführt. Die Häftlinge waren ursprünglich eine
größere Kaserne gewesen und befanden sich in sehr bau-
fälligen und verordneten Zustand. An sanitären Ein-
richtungen war nicht im Mindesten vorhanden. Es wurden
von unumwundener Leinwand angelegt, Wasch- und
auf dem Hofe geschaffen, die Räume sämtlich gereinigt
und mit Stroh versehen. Mit der Heimbewegungsgesellschaft

für Ordnung und Sauberkeit wie für ausreichende Ver-
pflegung und für die möglichen hygienischen Bedingungen.
Insoweit stand ihm der Vorgesetzte Dr. Wunderlich, Stadtrat
in Gollum, zur Seite.

Ich habe mich mit Krause sehr oft über die
Notwendigkeit unserer harten Maßnahmen ausgetauscht
und fand bei ihm volles Verständnis für diese Politik.
Dabei konnte ich auch feststellen, daß er über die
notwendigen vorläufigen Remissionen verfügte, um dabei nicht
in Ausschreitungen zu verfallen. Mir ist kein einziger
Fall bekannt geworden, in welchem ihm in dieser Hinsicht
ein Vorwurf gemacht werden konnte. Nach meiner Beobach-
tung hat er nach besten Wissen und Können seine Pflicht er-
füllt, ohne über sein Ziel zu schweifen und verdient jede
Anerkennung. Der verstorbene Chef der Sicherheits-
polizei, SS-Gruppenführer Heydrich, war über die
Tatigkeit und die Verdienste des SS-Hauptsturmführers
Krause durch sich laufend unterrichtet und hat sie
sicherlich anerkannt, daß er ihm nach seinem (Krause's)
Autounfall einen Urlaub auf Kosten des Reichsweh-
rheitshauptamtes gewährte und anordnete, dass die
durch den Unfall entstandenen Krankenhaus- und Kur-
kosten von Reichswehrrichtshauptamt getragen würden.

Sollte fiktiv, geschlichtet, unterschrieben:

Dr. Hermann

Lauden

SS-Brigadeführer.



Priests in "Fort VII"
in Toruń before being
shot in September 1939

Poles awaiting execution
in the market place in
Bydgoszcz in early
September 1939

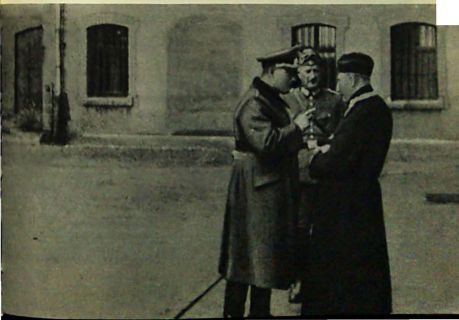


Fr. Tadeusz Zablocki,
vicar of Gniezno Ca-
thedral, sentenced to
death "as a sniper"
(Freischützer)



"Last request of the
condemned man"

*Dompredst von Gnesen,
Tadeusz von Zablocki
zum Tode verurteilten Freischützer*



ruins of the ghetto, for these were not included by the authorities among the "public" executions and the names of the victims were not posted.

These "public" executions were not what is usually understood by the term. A better name for them would be "street" executions, since they were carried out in the streets of Warsaw.

The usual procedure was that a strong detachment of police would suddenly arrive by car in the place where the execution was to be held. The police would seal off the site by holding up the traffic and clearing the streets. Right behind the police, a lorry would bring the firing squad, followed by a heavily escorted lorry or lorries with the condemned men. Their hands had been bound behind their backs and often they were tied to each other in pairs. To begin with, they were brought in their own clothes, later either in only their underwear or in clothing made from paper tissue. Sometimes they were blindfolded or had cloth or paper bags drawn over their heads. After an early execution, when one of the condemned men began to shout patriotic cries, the Germans started stuffing their mouths with plaster of Paris, gagging them with rags or sealing them with strips of plaster.

Automatic weapons were used to shoot the victims in groups of 5-10. After they had all been shot the officer in charge of the firing squad kicked the bodies with his foot and finished off those who still showed signs of life with his pistol. After this a special gang of prisoners, usually Jews, loaded the bodies into covered lorries, scrubbed the blood off the wall and pavement, and sometimes covered the bloodstains with sand. The whole operation was performed quickly and it was not long before all the lorries moved off and the street returned to its usual appearance. All that was left were the bullet holes in the wall and stains where the blood had not been thoroughly scrubbed off. But only a few minutes after the departure of the Germans, there would be people laying flowers and greenery at the foot of

the wall, lighting candles and putting up crosses. This would bring new reprisals from the German police. Without any warning they would fire on the crowds that had gathered around the site of the recent execution, trample and throw away the flowers and crosses, and beat and arrest the bystanders. But all these methods brought no results. The street executions, in which hundreds of persons picked up at random in the streets or taken off trams were shot, created such an atmosphere of general insecurity that the people of Warsaw positively welcomed any act of terrorism or reprisal against the occupation authorities.

Eventually, in the middle of February 1944, after the successful attempt on the life of SS Brigadeführer Kutschera, the SS and Police Chief for the Warsaw District, who was assassinated on February 1, 1944, the round-ups and public executions stopped. However, the executions in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto went on and thousands of innocent Poles continued to lose their lives.

Deportations

Deportations from the Annexed Territories

In the discussion of Nazi plans towards Poland mention was already made of Hitler's decree of October 8, 1939, whereby a part of western Poland was annexed by the Reich as the so-called "eastern territories" (*Ostgebiete*). This decree was published in the Reich Journal of Laws. * In this way the rulers of the Reich hoped to "legalize" the annexation of part of Poland after the conquest of the country by means of armed aggression.

It would be outside the scope of this book to discuss this act in the light of international law. What we are concerned with is its consequences for the Polish nation.

It is no accident that on October 7th, that is the day before the promulgation of this decree, Hitler issued another decree which was not officially published. This was the so-called "Decree on the Consolidation of German Nationhood."** In this Hitler stated that the Greater Reich, having removed the effects of the Treaty of Versailles, now had the opportunity to bring back and settle on its territories Germans who had up to then been living outside its boundaries. In addition, the Reich would be able to so dispose the settlement of the various nationality groups

* *Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über Gliederung und Verwaltung der Ostgebiete — Reichsgesetzblatt p. 2042.*

** *Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums vom 7. Oktober 1939. Main Commission Records 247/z/III, p. 707.*

within its sphere of interests (*Interessengrenzen*) that there would be clear dividing lines between them.

Heinrich Himmler was appointed "Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood" (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*) to carry out the provisions of the decree. The entrusting of this function to Himmler had an important political significance since Himmler, as head of the SS and at the same time Chief of the German police, had at his disposal a vast and powerful executive apparatus to help him carry out his task. Obviously the primary point was to strengthen the German element in the annexed territories. These areas were to become part of the Greater Reich "forever" and were to be purely German lands. This plan could, of course, only be realized if the Poles living in them were first removed, and Germans settled in their place. Under the decree on consolidating German nationhood these were to be primarily Germans living beyond the borders of the Reich. Just there was a close connection between both the decrees mentioned. Without the later decree the earlier one would have had no practical value.

Himmler's tasks as Reich Commissioner included the deportation of the populace living in the conquered territories, that is the "New Reich," and their replacement by *Volksdeutsche* brought from other areas. The aim of the Reich leaders was to present both the Poles and world opinion as rapidly as possible with a *fait accompli*. For this reason the deportation plans were to be put into effect even before the end of the war. Their execution was placed in the hands of the military authorities under the guidance of the Reichsführer SS.

In his capacity as Reich Commissioner, Himmler issued a number of orders and directives. In these he included the tasks that were to be undertaken in the first stages of the action:

1. Deportation of about 550,000 Jews, Poles belonging to the governing class who were antagonistically disposed towards Germany, and members of the Polish intelligentsia in Gdańsk and Pomerania. Those deported were to be sent to the Govern-

ment General with the Jews located between the Vistula and the Bug.

2. Confiscation of the property (*Grund und Boden*) of the Polish state, the deported Polish intelligentsia and all persons deported or shot for "hostile actions." The whole of the confiscated property was to be turned over to the Reich and put at the disposal of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood.

Discussing the settlement in the coming weeks of *Volksdeutsche* from the Baltic countries and Volhynia, Himmler pointed out in these directives that the operation would drag on for many years, perhaps even decades. As a result, the deportations were at first kept down to the round total of 550,000.

In an order of October 30, 1939, called *Anordnung 1/II*, Himmler provided instructions concerning deportations for the months of November-December 1939 and January-February 1940. They would embrace:

1. All Jews in the former Polish territories annexed by the Reich;

2. In the province of Gdańsk-Western Prussia — all the *Kongresspolen* that is Poles originating from other areas of Poland who had settled in Pomerania after the First World War;

3. In the province of Poznań, Eastern and Southern Prussia, the eastern part of Upper Silesia — a certain number, as yet unspecified, of particularly dangerous Poles.

Those deported were to be sent to the Government General where Polish administrative and local government officials were to be responsible for their billeting.

In each district (*Gau*) there was a special representative of the Reich Commissioner (*Beauftragter des Reichkommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*) to deal with the deportations; as a rule he was also the Higher SS and Police Leader. Thus the representative in the Warta Region was SS Gruppenführer Wilhelm Koppe, the Higher SS and Police Leader of the area;

in Gdańsk and Western Prussia it was SS Gruppenführer Richard Hildebrandt, the Higher SS and Police Leader for the "Vistula" district; in Eastern Prussia it was SS Gruppenführer Wilhelm Rediess, the Higher SS and Police Leader of the district, and in Silesia SS Gruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, the Higher SS and Police Leader for Silesia. Himmler's representative in the Government General was SS Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the Higher SS and Police Leader in the East.

These representatives were in charge of the deportation of Poles and Jews and the settlement of Germans within their areas, and to this end they issued various orders and set up special agencies and offices. They were responsible to Himmler for the totality of this action; under them came the heads of the various branches of the police and gendarmerie, including the Security Police (Gestapo) which, in line with the order issued on November 28, 1939, by the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service Reinhard Heidrich, was charged with the practical side of the deportations.

At a conference of Higher SS and Police Leaders held in Cracow on November 8, 1939, all these representatives of districts in the East approved a general directive concerning deportations from the annexed territories. It was decided that all Jews and *Kongresspolen* were to be deported from the area of Gdańsk-Western Prussia, the Warta Region, Eastern Upper Silesia and the southern part of Eastern Prussia by the end of February 1940. The numbers involved were calculated at about 1,000,000, with 400,000 from Gdańsk-Western Prussia. The remainder of the Poles were to be examined by a special commission which was to decide who of them were to be deported and who were to be detailed for Germanization or forced labour in the Reich.

In the Warta Region, SS Gruppenführer Koppe wrote in a confidential report of November 12, 1939, that between November 15, 1939, and February 28, 1940, 200,000 Poles and

100,000 Jews were to be removed from the area and sent to Lublin or south of Warsaw, he pointed out that the object of the deportations was to purge the area of the leading section of the Polish intelligentsia, make the new German territories secure and find homes and workshops for the incoming *Volksdeutsche*. The deportations of Poles and Jews were to precede the arrival of *Volksdeutsche* by a few days. The administrative and police authorities were to draw up confidential lists of persons to be deported and only in exceptional cases were labour offices to be allowed to seek police approval to hold back any person on the ground that he was an irreplaceable worker.

Those being deported had to abandon all their property and effects. They were allowed to take with them only hand baggage and a small amount of money, 200 zlotys in the case of Poles and 50 zlotys in the case of Jews. To prevent them from destroying their property or hiding money and jewelry they were given very little advance notice of the deportation.

Expecting that there would be large sums of money left by the deportees, Greiser, the governor of the Warta Region, issued an order on November 15, 1939, setting up a special account in the National Bank (*Landesbank*) in Poznań into which the money would be paid; and on December 13, 1939, Koppe formed a special department, called *Bodenamt*, to divide up the land confiscated from the Poles among the Germans and *Volksdeutsche* settled in their place.

With the completion of the technical preliminaries such as the drawing up of lists of persons to be deported, the securing of railway transport for them, etc., the Germans prepared the first stage of the "Immediate Plan" (*der erste Nahplan*) which called for the deportation of about 80,000 Poles and Jews. This was put into effect between the 1st and 17th of December, 1939, with 87,883 persons deported from 41 towns and counties of the Warta Region, to the Government General.

Between February 10 and March 15, 1940, a further 40,128 persons were deported as part of the *Zwischenplan*, the object

of which was to provide homes and workshops for the *Volksdeutsche* from the Baltic countries.

In the second phase of the "Immediate Plan" (*der zweite Nahplan*), which lasted from March 15, 1940, to January 20, 1941, 133,506 persons were deported, some to the Government General, some to forced labour in the Reich, while a certain number, "suitable for Germanization," were sent to Germany. German reports of the time state that the object of these deportations was to make way for *Volksdeutsche* from Volhynia, Galicia, Chełm, and the other side of the Narew. As more *Volksdeutsche* arrived from various parts of Europe, there were more deportations of Poles.

In the third phase of the "Immediate Plan" (*der dritte Nahplan*), covering the whole of 1941 and half of January 1942, 330,000 Poles were to be deported. This information was passed on by the Head of the Resettlement Department in Poznań, SS Obersturmbannführer Hermann Krummey, in a letter to the Main Reich Security Office on January 6, 1941. This report said that 132,000 Poles were to be deported to make way for 42,500 *Volksdeutsche* from Bessarabia; 22,000 were to be deported for 11,000 *Volksdeutsche* from Bucovina. In addition, another 130,000 Poles were to be expelled to increase the area of military training grounds, 30,000 to make room for resettled *Volksdeutsche* and 16,000 for craftsmen from the Reich. Krummey pointed out that should there be further arrivals of *Volksdeutsche*, more Poles would be deported, two Poles for each *Volksdeutsch*.

During the third phase of the *Nahplan* the Germans succeeded in deporting only 130,826 Poles, the majority of whom were sent to the Government General, with only a very small proportion going to the Reich for Germanization. The remainder, after being dispossessed of their homes, workshops and farms, were left in the Warta Region as forced labour on the farms of the *Volksdeutsche* or in industry. It often happened that a Pole who had lost his farm or workshop was forced to work as a farm labourer

or worker in the very same farm or artisanshop now taken over by a *Volksdeutsch*. In addition, 20,712 Poles were removed from the neighbourhood of Sieradz and their farms absorbed by army training grounds.

All these figures come from partially preserved German documents and give only a fraction of the picture of deportations.

Those taking part in the actual deportations came from every department of the occupation authorities — the administration, the NSDAP, every branch of the police, gendarmerie, *Selbstschutz*, etc.

The deportations usually took place at night. To prevent the Poles from evading deportation a special order was issued imposing a curfew from 7.30 to 6 a.m. Somewhere between these hours the police, gendarmerie or Gestapo would arrive and drag people out of their houses, sometimes not even allowing them to get dressed. They were forced to leave everything behind and permitted only to take hand baggage. They were marched to an assembly point where they waited until rail transport was arranged, without any provisions being made for food or sanitary facilities, even though their numbers included women, children, the sick and the aged.

In Poznań, the Germans started these expulsions as early as on October 22, 1939. The victims were placed in barracks on Główna Street where they remained for several weeks until they were taken off in cattle cars to the Government General.

Particular attention was paid to members of the Polish intelligentsia. In this period many of the professors at Poznań University were deported. One of them, Professor Tadeusz Silnicki, giving evidence at the trial of Artur Greiser before the Supreme National Tribunal on June 23, 1946, described the deportation:

"On November 9, 1939, I was deported from Poznań; the reason for my deportation was that I was a professor at Poznań University. I was taken together with my 75-year-old sick mother who was semi-paralyzed as a result of a serious operation following a fracture of the hip. When I drew the attention of

three German policemen that my mother could not move because she was paralyzed in the leg, they brutally replied 'Befehl' and 'heraus.' They rolled my mother out of bed onto the carpet and carried her to the bus. I must point out that I could not take any cases with me because I had to help carry my mother and that the police were looting the house for money and food. They left us only 100 zlotys per head. I had 10,000 zlotys taken. In the camp on Główna Street I met the following professors of the University: Taylor, Rosiński, Tymieniecki, Winiarski, and Bossowski. After three weeks on Główna Street we were sent off to Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. The journey lasted three days and four nights. My mother died on December 17, 1939. Her death was hastened, if not caused, by the appalling conditions in which the Poles found themselves during this evacuation."

In this manner about 70,000 Poles living in Poznań were deported in 1940; in their place came about 36,000 Germans from the Baltic region.

In Łódź, the deportations started in December 1939 during a period of intense frosts; about 6,000 families were involved, mainly the intelligentsia and wealthy businessmen. The same thing was repeated in other towns of the Warta Region, the population of Włocławek was reduced from 67,000 to 18,000, that of Kalisz from 80,000 to 20,000.

After the towns it was the turn of the villages. The first to be deported were the owners of landed estates, followed by the wealthier farmers and peasants. They had to leave everything behind: farm implements, livestock, furniture, clothes, etc. This pattern was followed in village after village. Some were removed in a particularly brutal manner, with the peasants abused and beaten to "knock Poland out of their heads," as the Germans put it.

Not even orphaned children were spared. However, their expulsion took on a somewhat different character. Several thousand children living in orphanages, special institutions, with adopted parents or even with their own parents were deported

to the heart of the Reich and handed over to German families for purposes of Germanization.

During the transportation of the victims by cattle cars to the Government General there were many fatalities. The doors of these wagons were locked from the outside and nobody was allowed out even to perform his natural functions. When the local villagers tried to hand food and water into the wagons at wayside stops, the escort kept them out, beating them with rifle butts and sometimes even opening fire. There were cases during the winter months when people froze to death. For example, 26 bodies were found among a trainload that arrived in Cracow on January 7, 1940, and in Dębica a transport contained 30 frozen children. Sometimes the bodies of the victims were frozen to the floors of the wagons. Even the authorities of the Government General complained that often a larger number of persons were deported from the annexed territories than had been provided in the approved plans, as a result of which the deportees had sometimes to spend as long as 8 days at the unloading point locked up in the cattle cars without being allowed to perform their natural functions. They also grumbled at the methods used in the deportations; for example, in one trainload that arrived in the Government General during heavy frosts 100 people had frozen to death, and often people arrived who were not fully dressed, which created problems of clothing and forced the authorities to ask the Reich for larger allotments of supplies. This they did not for humanitarian reasons but solely because they did not want the additional trouble.

In the province of Gdańsk-Western Prussia the deportations followed the same pattern. At a conference, presided over by SS Gruppenführer Hildebrandt, held in Gdańsk on November 15, 1939, instructions were drawn up for the deportation of about 400,000 Poles and Jews in the first phase. Apart from Jews, *Kongresspolen*, members of the intelligentsia and landowners these deportations were also to take in the families of "dangerous Poles who are no longer alive," that is, persons murdered dur-

ing the extermination campaign of autumn 1939. The expulsions were to start with the southern part of this province, since the population density there was smaller and it would be easier and quicker to draw up lists of persons to be deported; the deportations would then move northwards.

The census of this area carried out on December 3-6, 1939, was used as the basis for drawing up the lists of those to be deported. All the Poles were divided into two categories in the census forms: "natives" (*Einheimische*), that is those who had already been living there under the Prussian partition, and "newcomers" (*Zugewanderte*), that is those who had settled there after the First World War, otherwise known as *Kongresspolen*. The whole of the populace was divided into four groups (*Stufe*), of which Group III, that included *Kongresspolen* and all Poles who were "suspect" (*nicht einwandfrei*), and Group IV, which included Jews, undesirables, etc., had without exception to be cleared from the area of this province. The Poles in Group II, who were called "loyal" (*Gutwillige*), were allowed to remain.

The first wave of deportations came between October and December 1939; about 50,000 Poles and Jews mainly from the towns (for example, Gdynia) were expelled to the Government General. The main victims were members of the intelligentsia, landowners and merchants. Thus part of the population had been deported before the above-mentioned conference and census. These deportations were a continuation of the wave of repressions which had aimed at eliminating the leading Polish element from these areas and had begun with the mass executions of civilians in autumn 1939.

The deportations that followed and lasted for several years were closely connected with, and their intensity regulated by, the arrival of Germans repatriated from various countries.

It had been decided at the Gdańsk conference of November 15 that in the purely agricultural areas deportations could only begin after the arrival of a suitable number of resettlers who

could immediately take over the farms left by the deportees. This would avoid interruption in the work of the farms and save the harvest.

Under the Office of the Representative of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood a special Settlement Headquarter (*Ansiedlungsstab*) was set up in July 1940 with a network of local branches (*Kreisarbeitsstab*). The primary duty of these offices was to select the farms which were to be settled by Germans, in other words, draw up a list of Polish farmers who were to be ejected from their holdings. They also helped the Central Resettlement Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle*), set up in Pomerania at the end of 1940, in the deportation of Poles and the settlement of Germans.

The actual deportations were carried out by units of the police (various types, including the Gestapo), units of the SS, gendarmerie, *Selbstschutz*, etc. Special orders were issued concerning conduct during these operations.

The deportations were usually carried out at night without advance warning. The victims, allowed only hand baggage, were gathered at an assembly point and then taken to resettlement or labour camps. Camps of this sort were, among other places, to be found in Toruń, Potulice, Jabłonna and Tczew. They were usually converted factory buildings or barracks. The deportees were left there without medical attention, kept on a starvation diet and made to sleep in primitive cots. This led to a high mortality rate, especially among the aged and the very young.

As soon as the victims arrived in the camp they were searched and robbed of all their valuables, such as wedding rings, heirlooms, etc. There were also "racial examinations" on the basis of which the Germans separated Poles suitable for Germanization from those who were to be deported to the Government General or to forced labour in the Reich. At times, the victims were kept in these transit camps for as long as several weeks. In some they were kept even longer and forced to work on farms or in factories.

Apart from the resettlement camps there were also special camps for those Poles who already had been or were to be entered on the German national lists. Camps of this sort were located in Puck, Nowe Miasto and Toruń. The plan was that the people in these camps would later be resettled in the Reich.

The units involved in these deportations sent precise reports to their superiors. The police station in Chełmża, in a report sent on May 15, 1940, to a staff officer of the police in Bydgoszcz described in detail the course of the second deportations from Chełmża on May 14: "The action was carried out by the police assisted by 45 N.C.O's from a local anti-tank unit and 25 SS men. All the exits from the town were cordoned off by a double line of sentries who had lists of the persons to be deported. The action was begun at 3 a.m. A total of 145 persons were taken and temporarily gathered in two assembly points. Then they were all marched off to the station. The Director of the Labour Office, on the basis of a list in his possession, screened 25 persons for work (*Arbeitseinsatz*) in the Reich. At 13.20 the deportees were sent off in the direction of Toruń. In Toruń they were handed over to the Gestapo."

In Gdańsk-Western Prussia the deportations took other forms as well. Attention here was primarily paid to the owners of farms, workshops, houses and even apartments. These Poles were not deported to the Government General or the Reich but were simply dispossessed of their farms, workshops and homes, with everything in them, including furniture, clothing, underwear, etc. Frequently they were compelled to go on working as forced labour on the farms and workshops taken away from them and handed over to German colonists.

As already mentioned, the deportations also involved the Jews. The number of them living in Gdańsk-Western Prussia was comparatively small, especially after the completion of the extermination action (meaning executions) in the autumn of 1939 and the Jews' self-chosen evacuation of this area in the first weeks of the occupation. The final expulsion of the remain-

ing Jews, most of whom were living in the counties of Lipno and Rypin, was fixed for February 27 at 2.30 a.m. by a conference held in Gdynia on February 19, 1941. That day all the Jews (*Volljuden*) were deported and placed in a transit camp in Tczew.

It is difficult to arrive at exact figures for the number of Poles and Jews expelled from this area. Some figures are provided by the memorandums and reports of the resettlement authorities. SS Gruppenführer Hildebrandt, in a letter sent to Gauleiter Forster on January 6, 1942, said that up to March 16, 1941, 41,518 Poles had been deported to the Government General, a further 50,633 Poles had been removed outside the deportation actions while 1,022 Jews had been deported to Palestine and the Government General. In addition, 14,100 Poles had been expelled from their farms and placed in camps from which they had been sent to work, while there were 6,728 Poles in the camps at Potulice, Toruń and Smukala. In a report made by a police official attached to the Office of the Representative of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood it was stated that between March 16, 1941, and February 15, 1942, 19,277 Poles had been sent to camps and 1,792 Poles had been evicted from their farms and homes and billeted with other families. The reports of the Central Resettlement Office show that between February 15, and March 31, 1942, 1,000 Poles were placed in the camp at Jabłonowo and 4,520 Poles sent to the camp at Potulice, while between May 1 and June 15, 1942, 8,800 Poles were taken to Potulice. Of course, the deportations did not stop at this latter date but continued as more German colonists arrived.

In Warsaw Province the area known as the Ciechanów Region and Suwałki county, which had been incorporated into East Prussia, was also included in what Himmler in his directives called the "new shaping of German settlement areas." This euphemism concealed the Germanizing of Polish territories by

deportations of the Polish population and their replacement by German settlers.

The first victims of the deportations were the owners of large estates, members of the intelligentsia and Jews; they were followed by a vast number of peasants. They were taken to resettlement camps from which they were transferred to the Government General or the Reich for forced labour. As in other areas, the deportees had to leave behind all their effects and property and were allowed to take only hand baggage. These deportations were carried out by the same authorities as in the provinces already described.

A typical phenomenon in this region was the deportation from various localities, particularly from those lying on the fringes of the big estates, in order to enlarge their acreage. One example of this was the clearing of the 14 villages lying on the edges of the Krasne estate in Ciechanów county, where Gauleiter Erich Koch set up his country residence and organized a hunting estate. The owners of 136 farms were evicted and their buildings demolished. A similar fate befell Poles living in the villages round the Nacpolsk estate in Płońsk county. In many cases these deportations were combined with "Pacification actions" during which whole villages were flattened and their inhabitants shot.

The deportation campaign, which also involved areas incorporated into the *Gau Oberschlesien* as so-called Katowice "regency," took one form in the province of Silesia and another in the incorporated counties of Cracow and Kielce Provinces.

As far as Silesia was concerned the Germans considered that it contained the largest percentage of population suitable for Germanization. In addition, Silesia, being an industrial and mining area, required a large number of workers, especially miners, foundrymen, and skilled workers who came from among the local Poles. For this reason, the deportations from industrial and mining areas to the Government General and Reich never reached the same massive proportions. Poles, however, were



Palmiry. Lorries used to bring the victims from Warsaw

Palmiry. Blindfolding of women before execution





Palmiry. Blindfolded
men being taken to
the execution site



Palmiry. Exhumation of
mass graves in 1946.
The blindfold can still
be seen on the eyes of
the corpse

Palmiry. Cemetery of the murdered victims





Public execution in Kutno, June 3, 1941.



Two Poles from the Inowroclaw region tied up before execution

ruthlessly expelled from the agricultural areas to free their farms and workshops for German settlers. On top of this, Jews and members of the Polish intelligentsia were deported from the whole of the region.

In the annexed parts of Cracow and Kielce Provinces the deportations proceeded with their relentless thoroughness. In some districts all the Poles were expelled, in others only some of them. Among the worst sufferers was the county of Żywiec. Here the plans had been drawn up in the spring of 1940 in the strictest secrecy so that the intended victims, unaware of their inclusion in the lists, would carry on tilling their land to the very last moment and would not get rid of their effects or livestock, which were to be handed over to the incoming German colonists.

The deportations started in the autumn of 1940 covering, besides Żywiec itself, such places as Jaleśnia, Sopotnia, Sól, Zwardoń, Radzichów, and went on for some time. The procedure was the same as in other areas: during the night or in the early hours of the morning a particular town or village would be surrounded and people dragged out of their homes. As usual they had to leave all their property behind. After this they were led under heavy escort to assembly points in Żywiec and Rajcza. Here their persons and baggage were thoroughly searched and anything of value taken; in return they were given 20 zlotys in Government General currency. Men and young people were separated from these groups and sent to forced labour in the Reich. The rest — mainly women, children and old people — were shipped off to the Government General. The roads and streets along which they were marched to the assembly points were sealed off and filled with police. The rail transports were guarded by a heavy escort who prevented the deportees from receiving any food or medical attention on the journey.

The remainder of the Polish population was also dispossessed of its land and forced to work for the German settlers brought from Volhynia and Bucovina. In many cases the confiscated

holdings were merged into one farm with the best buildings left on it while the rest were demolished. The pattern was repeated in the towns, with the Poles losing their houses, apartments, workshops, shops, etc.

It can be seen that the "eastern territories," annexed by the Reich, were to become German area pure and simple. Before the war about 10,740,000 people had been living in this region of whom over 9,500,000 were Poles. German plans required the deportation of at least 5,000,000. In the first years of the occupation the Germans carried out over a third of this plan, deporting about 2,000,000 Poles. In their place they managed to settle about 500,000 Germans. Of the remaining 4,500,000 Poles some were to be Germanized and the rest used as forced labour.

Deportations from the Zamość Area

The Nazis had planned the Germanization not only of the annexed areas but also of the rest of Poland, which had been formed into the Government General. Although the realization of this project was postponed till after the victorious conclusion of the war, some attempts at Germanization were made while the war was still on with the deportation of Poles and their replacement by Germans from the Government General and elsewhere.

For these experiments the Germans picked four south-eastern counties in Lublin Province: Zamość, Biłgoraj, Tomaszów and Hrubieszów.

There were many reasons for this choice. First there was the geographical position of the Zamość area, which borders on the Soviet Union; the Germans intended to convert it into a line of defence settled by select SS families who would form a stronghold (*SS-Stützpunkt*) and barrier against influences from the Socialist state. A Germanized Zamość area would also form a bridge between the Germanized Baltic countries and the Ger-

man settlements in Siedmiogród. This belt of Germanized territories was to encircle the Polish areas lying to the west and, by means of pressure from the Warta Region to the east and from the Lublin area to the west, make possible the gradual economic and physical stifling of Polish culture in the encircled areas.* Another important factor was that the Lublin area, which except for Biłgoraj county possesses a very fertile soil, was already settled by a certain number of Germans.

On July 20, 1941, not quite a month after the attack on the Soviet Union, Himmler made a personal visit to Lublin and Zamość and issued instructions to create a German "settlement region" around Zamość. In connection with this Zamość was to be redeveloped and a special clubhouse built for the SS (*SS-Führerheim*) with apartments for the Reichsführer SS and his guests. Zamość, once it was Germanized, was to be called Himmlerstadt.**

Following these instructions plans were drawn up to evacuate in 1941 the Poles from seven villages round Zamość, which also contained a number of German colonists*** and replace them with peasants of German origin from around Radom (105 families). This plan was carried out in November with Poles being deported from Huszczka Duża (November 6), Huszczka Mała (November 6), Wysokie (November 8), Białobrzegi (November 9), Bortatycze (November 9), and Podhuszczka (November 25). The total number evacuated came to 2,098; they were placed in barracks in Zamość before being sent to various villages on the Bug in Hrubieszów county.

After this action, which was not planned on a large scale,

* Letter sent by SS Hauptsturmführer Helmut Müller, delegate to the Office of the SS and Police Chief in Lublin, to the head of the Main SS Office for Race and Settlement, Oct. 15, 1941. Main Commission Records 963 z/t 2 Document No. 783.

** Himmler's note of July 21, 1941. Main Commission Records 963 z/t 2 document No. 522.

*** Müller's letter as above.

preparations went on until autumn 1942 for mass deportations. A census was carried out in the countryside, listing farms, property, livestock and people.

Various departments, including some in Berlin, such as the Reich Security Office and the Main SS Office for Race and Settlement, were responsible for issuing a number of directives and orders concerning the deportation of Poles and the settlement of *Volksdeutsche* in this area.

At a conference held in Cracow on October 10, 1942, Himmler approved a directive, later embodied in his order of November 12, 1942, on "the demarcation of the first settlement area in the Government General."* In this order the choice fell on Zamość County (*Kreishauptmannschaft*) and to it were to come resettlers from Bośnia together with *Volksdeutsche* from the East and the Government General. The county and town of Zamość were to be settled with Germans by the summer of 1943. The whole operation was to be the responsibility of SS Gruppenführer Krüger, the Higher SS and Police Leader in the Government General, with assistance from the RSHA and RuSHA. He was also to carry out the "essential" deportation of Poles from this area.

Since this operation was linked with the "search for German blood" project (*Fahndung nach deutschem Blut*), a branch office of the Central Resettlement Office in Łódź was set up in Zamość (*Umwandererzentralstelle Litzmannstadt – Zweigstelle Zamosc*); this came under the chief of the security police and security service. The head of this department in both Zamość and Łódź was SS Obersturmbannführer Hermann Krumey. His job included the carrying out of "racial tests" on the deported Poles to establish their proportion of German or Nordic blood, and on the basis of these tests to determine who of them were suitable for Germanization and who were to be deported.

* *Allgemeine Anordnung Nr. 17 C über die Bestimmung eines ersten Siedlungsbereiches im Generalgouvernement*. Main Commission Records 963 z/t 2.

The key to these tests was provided by the division of the local populace into four racial groups (*RuS-Wertungsgruppe*).

Group I consisted of Germans. Group II included people who were considered to have some percentage of German blood or features and so were suitable for Germanization. Group III was made up of persons capable of working. Group IV consisted of the physically unfit and "undesirable elements." It was supposed that Groups I and II would cover about 5 per cent of the population, Group III — 74 per cent, and Group IV — 21 per cent. The fate of each deportee was decided by his group.

Thus, following final approval by Himmler, the authorities concerned (the RSHA, Krüger, and the Central Resettlement Office) stipulated in their orders that:*

Those included in Groups I and II were to be placed in a camp in Łódź and following a second series of tests sent to the Reich to be Germanized.

Families and individuals in Group III — but only those who would be able to work, hence excluding children and old people — were to be sent to Berlin for forced labour to replace the Jewish workers in the armament factories. A certain number from this group was to be held back for work in the Zamość area.

Children up to the age of 14, people over 60, and the sick and the disabled in Groups III and IV were to be distributed among the *Rentendörfer*, villages mainly in the Warsaw district; the age limit for children was fixed at 14 because persons below that age could not be sent for forced labour in the Reich.

All persons in Group IV between the ages of 14 and 60 were to be sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

All the property of the deportees, except for hand baggage and an allowance of 20 zlotys per head, was to be confiscated.

* Teletype sent by SS Gruppenführer Müller, Chief of Gestapo; Main Commission Records 963 z/t 2. document No. 500. Krüger's order of Nov. 16, 1942, Main Commission Records 963 z/t 2; Krumeys's directive of Nov. 21, 1942.

When separating children from their parents, if there was any resistance, force was to be used. Only infants up to 6 months of age were to be allowed to remain with their mothers.

The problem of transport was also taken into consideration. An arrangement was made with the Railway Ministry whereby, beginning with November 2, 1942, it would supply two trains a week from Zamość to Berlin, each taking 1000 persons, and three trains from Zamość to Auschwitz of the same capacity.

Although these preparations were kept a strict secret, the resistance movement managed to get hold of some information about the planned operations and to pass it on to the local population. As a result, the peasants were alarmed and some of them began removing their families to other districts, slaughtering their poultry and pigs and paying far less attention to their land than usual.

When the preparations were complete, the Germans launched their mass deportation operation on November 27, 1942, beginning with Skierbieszów and the surrounding villages in Zamość county. The operation went on till early March 1943 and swept Hrubieszów, Tomaszów and Zamość counties.

Altogether 116 villages were evacuated in this period: 47 in Zamość county (12 in November, 35 in December), 15 in Tomaszów (all in November), and 54 in Hrubieszów (26 in January, 26 in February, and 2 in March).

The operation was planned to dispose of about 140,000 persons; in fact it only succeeded in rounding up and deporting about 41,000, or less than 30 per cent. After the first deportations the people in the villages began wholesale abandonment of their holdings and hid in the neighbouring fields or with relatives and friends in other places. Often whole villages would be deserted, the inhabitants returning only at night for a few minutes to get food. Sometimes the German units which had arrived to clear a village found in it only a few aged persons. Conditions have been carefully described by witnesses

examined by the Polish authorities concerning the circumstances of the deportations.

Thus, M. Król, a farmer, declared: "Although the Germans did not formally evacuate the village of Staw Ujazdowski, from the spring of 1943 until the German retreat there were no Poles living in it. They roamed around the neighbouring woods and fields and only dropped into the village for a few minutes to get food when they saw no Germans about."

Another farmer, A. Ścibak, said: "From January 1943, the Poles stopped coming back to Staw Noakowski. Just sometimes at night it was possible to get into the village and fetch something to eat..."

The operation was carried out by various units such as the SS, Gestapo, Wehrmacht, *Sonderdienst*, *Volksdeutsche*, and by Ukrainians in the service of the Germans. Usually a particular village would be surrounded at night or in the early morning. Then the Germans would march in and order the village bailiff to assemble all the inhabitants in one place, or they would enter each house separately and drag out the occupants. In the larger villages the usual practice was to give orders for an announcement to be made in the regular way (bell-ringing, etc.,) that all the inhabitants were to gather in a specified place. Sometimes, to speed up the deportation, round-ups were organized a few days earlier in which adults — mainly men — who might cause some sort of trouble during the deportation were arrested. The aged, the sick, the disabled, and babies had also to leave the houses regardless of the weather, and the German reaction to any show of resistance was ruthless, frequently resorting to murder. A large number of witnesses have given accounts of these operations, but three examples will suffice to provide a general picture.

A. Tkaczyk from Nowa Wieś: "My father was sick at the time; he was 64 and refused to leave the house, so the Germans threw him out of the window."

W. Guz from Rozłopy: "Marcin, who was about 70, told one

of the 'blacks'* during a deportation that he was an old man and would not leave his home, but could look after the cows here. The 'blacks' led him outside and shot him."

A. Wiącek from Nielisz: "The Germans also murdered the family of Władysław Uszajec; they killed his wife and four children. The eldest boy was then twelve; he tried to save his life by running away. A German ran after him, grabbed him by the collar and shot him in the back of the head with his revolver. Three children were shot in the house. The German picked up each child, shot it in the back of the head and threw it out of the window."

Anyone who resisted or tried to escape was shot. In Zamość county, for instance, 117 persons were killed during the deportation operations.

According to the orders issued, the evacuation of each locality was to last about an hour. For this reason the deportees, who were dragged out of their beds, very often did not have time to get properly dressed, particularly in wintertime, or to pack any food or essentials.

The deportees, after being driven out of their homes and rounded up in some assembly point, were taken to a transit camp in Zamość. For distances of under twenty kilometres they were taken on foot; for longer distances they were transported in carts, lorries or sealed railway cars. The carts were usually commandeered in a neighbouring village. When the bailiff of a particular village received orders to supply a certain number of carts on a certain day, it was a sign that one of the neighbouring villages was to be deported. The inhabitants would then be warned so that they would have a chance to escape, hide or prepare their belongings.

The transit camp in Zamość consisted of about a dozen barracks, each of which was separated from the other with its

* "Blacks" was the name given by villagers to the Germans in dark uniforms who took part in pacifications, round-ups, deportations, etc.

own barbed-wire fence. The deportees were treated like prisoners and not allowed outside the camp. On arrival they were subjected to the aforementioned "racial tests" and divided into the four racial groups. A classification stamp was put in the file of each of the deportees, thus indicating to which transport they were to be assigned. People who were found to have German features had the letters WE (*Wiedereindeutschungsfähig*), that is, suitable for Germanization. Those condemned to forced labour in the Reich were given the letters AA (*Arbeitseinsatz Altreich*); the old, the sick and the disabled — the letters RD (*Rentendörfer*); and children — the letters Ki (*Kinderaktion*). The able-bodied who were to remain in the area as labourers on country estates or on farms handed out to *Volksdeutsche* were marked in the records with the letters AG (*Arbeitseinsatz Generalgouvernement*). Deportees who were to be sent to the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau were given the letters KL (*Lager Birkenau*).*

After this "racial" screening the deportees were divided into the above groups and placed in separate barracks. At this stage families would be split up, with each member assigned to a different transport and children torn from their parents. There were harrowing scenes as children, even babes in arms, were taken from their mothers by brute force. The children so taken were housed together with the aged and the crippled in the worst quarters — the so-called "stables." From then on their parents were not allowed to see them. If one of the mothers tried to approach the barbed-wire surrounding the barracks containing the children, a dog was set on her and she was beaten unconscious. The testimony of many witnesses could be cited as illustration:

M. Czerniak (mechanic): "I witnessed the separation of chil-

* Instructions sent by SS Obersturmbannführer Krumei, head of the Central Resettlement Office, dated Zamość, Nov. 21, 1942; Main Commission Records 963 z/t. 2.

dren from their parents. There were dreadful scenes, for there were often cases when parents refused freely to hand over their children. In such cases the children were taken by force and the parents beaten. The worst offender was Gestapo-man Grunert, who went around kicking people and hitting them in the face with his fist or a bullwhip..."

B. Świst (farmer): "I saw children being taken from their mothers; some were even torn from the breast. It was a terrible sight: the agony of the mothers and fathers, the beating by the Germans, and the crying of the children. While I was in Zamość about 100 children were taken from their mothers..."

F. Wosiak (farm woman): "The children were allowed to spend one night with their parents. The next day the children were put in one place and the adults in another. Children up to 12 or 13 years were taken, including infants. Katarzyna Królikowska from Old Zamość had her 8-month-old baby taken from her... The baby was murdered immediately behind the wire."

K. Mazurkiewicz (farm woman): "When my children were being taken I tried to resist; I did not want to hand them over, so I was beaten by a German who hit me so hard in the face with a revolver he had in his hand that he knocked out one of my teeth... Two days after my arrival in Zamość the whole of Block 10 was loaded on to a train and we were sent off to Auschwitz. In Auschwitz my husband and son perished and I returned with my daughter. My two youngest children were deported to Garwolin..."

Z. Tomaszewska (farm woman): "I was a witness when the commandant of the camp took away the children of parents from Wielącza: Aniela Kowalczyk and Jan Byk. When they refused to hand them over they were violently beaten and kicked by him... I saw the Germans almost daily take away up to ten corpses of children..."

Having been divided into groups, the deportees remained in the barracks, often for some length of time, until a particular

transport was made up. Life in the camp was a nightmare. Some of the huts had no flooring and people had to sleep on the ground. The appalling hygienic condition and starvation rations led to a large incidence of disease and a high mortality rate. The "sick-bay" was always overcrowded. The sick lay in tiered bunks without blankets and covered themselves with anything they had managed to take with them during the deportations. Among the testimony to the high death rate is that of A. Świst:

"On November 28, 1942, together with others, I was deported from Wiśłowiec and placed behind wire in Zamość. In Zamość I was detailed to the removal of corpses from the barracks. Over a period of four months I suppose about 500 corpses of old people and children were taken out. The children and the aged died like flies. We were not allowed to hand the bodies over to their families, but we did this in secret. The bodies were taken to the parish cemetery in Zamość. The bodies were packed into a single crate, the lid would be opened over the pit and the bodies poured into it..."

The lot of the children was particularly wretched. Severed from their parents, underfed, unwashed, lice-ridden they were easy prey to disease and many of them died. In the winter their ears, noses, fingers and toes were in many cases frost-bitten.

After a sufficient number of persons from each of the racial groups had been gathered to make up a transport, they were taken to one of the places already mentioned. The usual method of getting a transport together was that in the evening the inmates were paraded on the square where the names of those selected for a particular shipment were read out. This normally took several hours, and, regardless of the weather, the people were forced to remain on the square during the whole time. Next they would be taken to the station and packed into freight cars without food or water. The journey usually lasted several days and the wagons were kept sealed up throughout the trip.

Many people died among the transports, particularly children and old folks making the journey in wintertime.

The able-bodied were not the only people sent to Auschwitz, and this created certain problems in the camp. This transpired from a report written on December 16, 1942, by SS Untersturmführer Heinrich Kinna* who was in charge of a transport of 644 deportees. They had left Zamość on December 10th and arrived in Auschwitz at about 11 p.m. on December 12th. Kinna discussed with the Deputy Camp Commandant, SS Hauptsturmführer Aumeier (mistakenly referred to as Haumeier) the wishes of the camp authorities concerning the deportees from the Zamość area. "As regards capability for work," he wrote in the report, "SS Hauptsturmführer Haumeier stated that only able-bodied Poles should be sent to the camp so as to avoid any unnecessary strain on the camp or the incoming traffic (*Zubringerverkehr*). Handicapped persons such as imbeciles, cripples, and the sick must be removed from the camp by liquidation as soon as possible to reduce the strain on it. The use of this expedient is, however, made the more difficult, because the Reich Security Office's orders are that in the case of Poles, unlike the means used with regard to Jews death is to be from natural causes. For this reason the camp authorities have requested that we stop sending them persons who are unfit for work." The camp headquarters also raised objections to the baggage brought by the Poles sent to Auschwitz and suggested that they only be allowed to take what they would need on the journey; the rest of the baggage could be confiscated in Zamość and handed over to the appropriate authorities for their disposal; to pacify the Poles it could be said that the baggage would be sent on later.

Whole families, including children, were also sent to Auschwitz. Most of these children were killed after a certain time

* Main Commission Records 963 z/t. 2.

with intra-cardiac injections of phenol. Numerous witnesses, former inmates of Auschwitz, have testified about this.

J. Szczepanowski: "I was in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau from May 12, 1942, till March 12, 1943. Just before Christmas 1942, while in Birkenau, I saw a transport arrive from Zamość county containing men, women and children. The transport numbered about 700 persons. The children were aged between 9 and 14. There were 48 boys. I was present when the boys were counted in Birkenau near the *Schreibstube*. After the arrival of this transport the men and boys were separated from the women and the girls. From conversations with the men it turned out that there were altogether about 350 men and boys; the rest were women and girls. The block leaders and Kapos divided the 48 boys from the aforementioned transport among themselves hoping in this way to save them. As a result, the boys survived about 5–6 weeks, after which they were summoned to the *Schreibstube* where they were counted and the number came to 48. The boys came from the village of Sady in the administrative district of Skierbieszów, from the neighbourhood of Skierbieszów and Skierbieszów itself, from Majdan, Zamość and the environs of Zamość. One boy was from Złojec, administrative district of Wysokie; he came from Wielacza and worked for Czop. I cannot remember the names of these boys. The order to take the boys before the *Schreibstube* came from camp headquarters. The Germans started a rumour in the camp that the boys would be sent for training as bricklayers. As I found out, the Germans transferred these boys to the camp at Auschwitz to Block 13 where they remained two days, after which they were killed with injections and cremated. I cannot remember the name of the German doctor who killed the children..."

In cases where children were killed in this way the camp medical officer, SS Obersturmführer Dr. Entress, drew up, on an official form, a death certificate for camp headquarters; this

contained a fictitious case history of some invented diseases and a fictitious cause of death. This became standard practice in Auschwitz, and a table of causes of death was even produced which showed how they should be alternated in these certificates. The time of death was put down at intervals of several minutes.

The original Auschwitz records include two such bogus certificates: Tadeusz Rycyk, aged 9, of Sitaniec, and Mieczysław Rycaj, aged 12, of Wólka Złojcka, both of whom arrived in a transport of deportees from the Zamość area.

A former Auschwitz prisoner, S. Głowa, has described in his evidence the way in which they were murdered:

"I was imprisoned in Auschwitz from August 18, 1941, to August 30, 1944, I was branded with the number 20017... In October 1941, I got camp diarrhoea and was put in Block 20 which at the time was being used as a hospital for those suffering from infectious diseases. When I got better I was kept on in the block as an orderly... The method of killing people with phenol injections was introduced and organized by the camp medical officer, SS Obersturmführer Dr. Entress; it was first resorted to in the middle of 1941. At the beginning the 'jabs' were given in the cellars of Block 28 which contained the mortuary. Later the operation was shifted to Block 20 to which admission was forbidden because it was quarantined... In Block 20 all offenders, who had been condemned to death, were collected in the washroom where they were led down the corridor to the medical office. There one condemned man was sat on one stool and a second on another; their chests were stretched by pressing a knee into their backs, and the man giving the injection, Mieczysław Pańszczyk or others, stuck a needle containing a 30 per cent solution of carbolic acid (phenol) into their chests directly into the heart chamber... The majority of those killed by injections were Jews. But Aryans of every nationality were also murdered in this way. In the winter of 1942/43 Rapportführer Palitsch from Birkenau brought two boys from a

transport from Zamość. He first placed them in Block 11, and the next day brought them to Block 20 where Pańszczyk 'jabbed' them both. The boys were Mieczysław Rycaj and Tadeusz Rycyk. The parents of the two boys, together with the younger members of the family, were gassed. Out of the whole transport only about 90 boys between 8 and 14 were selected; Rycaj and Rycyk belonged to this group. The remainder, that is about 90 boys, were brought to Block 20 by Palitsch and killed with injections by Scherpe, a medical corps N.C.O. Pańszczyk broke down, because after the killing of Rycyk and Rycaj, he stopped giving the jabs..."

Families of deportees, including children, were also taken to the concentration camp at Majdanek.

As soon as the Poles had been deported their places were filled by German colonizers from various countries, by *Volksdeutsche* from Lublin Province and, in some places, by local Ukrainians. Sometimes the holdings were merged and the larger properties given to colonists while farmhouses and buildings were pulled down.

This deportation action lasted until early March 1943. There were many reasons for its temporary suspension. The mass eviction of Polish peasants from their farms and artisans from their workshops disorganized the economic exploitation of this area. The German colonists who had been settled were poor farmers and sometimes ruined the soil. It was also difficult for them to adjust to their new circumstances. Living in an area that was foreign to them, they did not feel secure in their ownership despite the protection of the SS, the police and the administration, and longed for a return to their old homes. The resistance movement, growing in size and efficiency, also threatened their security. Another argument in favour of temporary suspension was the approach of spring and the sowing and ploughing which would have to be done to ensure a good harvest for the Nazis.

The SS authorities and the police generally took the line that

the deportations should continue, though with a certain interval needed to prepare the ground for further operations. The administration, however, considered that due to the aforementioned reasons the deportations should be temporarily called off and started again at a more convenient period.

Zörner, the Governor of the Lublin District, in a memorandum to Governor General Frank of February 24, 1943,* pointed to the unfortunate effects that the mass deportations of Poles from the Zamość area had had on the Nazi economy; finally he warned that in these circumstances he could not accept any responsibility for future harvests and asked that the deportations be postponed.

Governor Frank, in informing Hitler of the clashes in the Government General between the SS and the administration over the various instruments of terror and oppression being used to destroy and suppress Polish life, also mentioned the economic and security drawbacks of the deportations which he thought might militate against the achievement of final victory. However, he made it clear that in his opinion humanitarian considerations could not carry any weight in discussing the deportations.**

Finally it was decided to suspend the mass deportations temporarily until after work in the fields and spring sowing had been completed by the Poles, and in this way to guarantee the grain harvest. As a result, during this period only single families were deported.

Mass deportations were re-started in June 1943 and continued till August. They were undertaken partly to release farms for German settlers and partly under the pretext of putting down "the gangs," that is the active resistance movement — the partisans.

* Main Commission Records 963 z/t. 2, document No. 503.

** Frank's letter to Hitler, May 25, 1943. Main Commission Records z/t. 2, document No. NO-2202.

Bekanntmachung

Trotz meiner wiederholten Warnungen wurden am 10.11.1943 wiederum feige Ueberfälle auf Deutsche und in deutschen Diensten stehende Personen in der Stadt Warschau ausgeführt. Hierbei sind 1 Wehrmachtangehöriger in der Obozowastrasse und 1 weiterer Wehrmachtangehöriger in der Neuen Welt schwer verletzt, 1 Werksschutzmann in der Lochowskastrasse angeschossen, 1 polnischer Polizeibeamter in der Św. Wincentystr. getötet und 2 polnische Polizeibeamte in der Redutowastrasse und in der Kepnastrasse schwer verletzt worden. Ich habe deshalb von den durch das Standgericht der Sicherheitspolizei verurteilten Personen, die zunächst für einen Gnadenurweis in Aussicht genommen waren, die nachfolgend aufgeführten 60 Verbrecher am 12.11.1943 öffentlich erschossen lassen

1) Bielecki Stefan, geb. 7.12.21	21) Bili Bielecki, geb. 12.11.11	41) Gora Jan, geb. 15.1.20
2) Bielecki Wlad. Marian, geb. 7.10.27	22) Kozinski Jozef Teofil, geb. 21.1.11	42) Kubiński Jan, geb. 24.1.10
3) Papiński Zygmunt, geb. 27.10.24	23) Kozinski Eugeniusz, geb. 1.12.13	43) Kubiński Tadeusz, geb. 10.8.10
4) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 14.12.20	24) Wyszynski Wladyslaw, geb. 24.12.12	44) Kubiński Stanislaw, geb. 14.12.10
5) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 15.11.07	25) Popielko Wladyslaw Wyszynski, geb. 20.1.24	45) Jankowski Andrzej, geb. 5.5.21
6) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 20.10.15	26) Popielko Wyszynski, geb. 14.1.20	46) Bielecki Tadeusz, geb. 17.3.10
7) Zwick Jan, geb. 14.11.04	27) Zwick Jozef Teofil, geb. 7.1.20	47) Bielecki Tadeusz, geb. 15.10.10
8) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 10.12.01	28) Wyszynski Jozef, geb. 20.1.20	48) Jurek Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.20
9) Kozinski Adam, geb. 11.12.10	29) Kozinski Zygmunt, geb. 2.12.20	49) Kubiński Jozef, geb. 22.1.09
10) Dabek Zdzislaw Grzegorz, geb. 17.11.11	30) Kozinski Jozef, geb. 1.10.20	50) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 6.10.10
11) Kozinski Jozef, geb. 3.11.17	31) Popielko Zygmunt, geb. 10.1.10	51) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 7.3.07
12) Kozinski Kuzmierz, geb. 20.11.20	32) Wyszynski Jan, geb. 27.10.10	52) Kubiński Wyszynski, geb. 27.10.10
13) Kozinski Marian, geb. 10.1.10	33) Wyszynski Marian, geb. 6.10.10	53) Lurkowski Jan, geb. 6.11.10
14) Bielecki Henryk, geb. 25.1.10	34) Popielko Jozef, geb. 10.1.10	54) Bielecki Stanislaw, geb. 14.1.12
15) Wyszynski Tadeusz, geb. 10.7.11	35) Bielecki Tadeusz, geb. 7.1.21	55) Plesner Jozef Kuzmierz, geb. 9.10.10
16) Wyszynski Andrzej, geb. 1.1.20	36) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 9.1.20	56) Kuzmierz Zygmunt, geb. 20.1.12
17) Kuzmierz Zygmunt, geb. 15.12.12	37) Kubiński Zygmunt, geb. 27.1.10	57) Gora Jozef, geb. 20.1.12
18) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 14.12.10	38) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.24	58) Lurkowski Henryk, geb. 10.1.10
19) Jurek Wyszynski, geb. 1.1.20	39) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 24.7.10	59) Bielecki Kuzmierz, geb. 24.1.10
20) Zwick Andrzej, geb. 4.12.10	40) Wyszynski Jan, geb. 20.1.10	60) Gora Jan, geb. 17.12.10

Weiter sind durch das Standgericht der Sicherheitspolizei gemäss § 1 u. 2 d. r. VO. zur Bekämpfung von Angriffen gegen das deutsche Aufbauwerk im GG. vom 2.10.43 wegen Waffenbesitzes und Teilnahme an verbotenen Organisationen am 12.11.43 zum Tode verurteilt worden:

1) Sternowski Witold, geb. 5.1.25	16) Lachowski Wladyslaw, geb. 21.1.20	36) Zurek Stefan, geb. 12.1.20
2) Sternowski Przemyslaw, geb. 1.1.24	17) Bielecki Eugeniusz, geb. 1.12.13	37) Zurek Stanislaw, geb. 14.12.10
3) Wyszynski Adam, geb. 10.1.10	18) Popielko Zygmunt, geb. 14.1.10	38) Bielecki Andrzej, geb. 10.10.10
4) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.20	19) Wyszynski Zygmunt, geb. 27.1.10	39) Fortowski Eugeniusz, geb. 1.1.14
5) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.20	20) Kuzmierz Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.20	40) Lurkowski Jozef, geb. 14.1.10
6) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 17.1.20	21) Wyszynski Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.25	41) Wyszynski Stanislaw, geb. 1.1.10
7) Sternowski Stanislaw, geb. 20.12.10	22) Bielecki Adam, geb. 20.1.20	42) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 10.1.10
8) Sternowski Wyszynski, geb. 10.1.10	23) Bielecki Wyszynski, geb. 1.1.10	43) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.10
9) Wyszynski Wladyslaw, geb. 27.1.10	24) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	44) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10
10) Wyszynski Wyszynski, geb. 1.1.10	25) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	45) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10
11) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	26) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	46) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10
12) Wyszynski Wyszynski, geb. 1.1.21	27) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	47) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10
13) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.14	28) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	48) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10
14) Lurkowski Wyszynski, geb. 20.1.10	29) Bielecki Zygmunt, geb. 1.1.21	49) Bielecki Jozef, geb. 1.1.10

Die Verurteilten zu Ziffer 1) bis 40) sind für einen Gnadenurweis in Aussicht genommen.

Sollten jedoch in den nächsten 3 Monaten im Bereich der Stadt Warschau oder der Kreishauptmannschaft Warschau-Land Gewalttaten, insbesondere Überfälle auf Deutsche, Angehörige der mit dem Grossdeutschen Reich verbündeten Staaten oder im Interesse des Aufbauwerkes im GG. arbeitende Nichtdeutsche begangen werden, so wird — sofern der Täter nicht sofort ergriffen wird — das Urteil auch an diesen für einen Gnadenurweis in Aussicht genommenen Verurteilten vollstreckt werden, und zwar in der Form, dass für jeden Überfall auf eine solche Person der beabsichtigte Gnadenurweis für mindestens 10 der Verurteilten heilig wird.

Ist die Tat von kommunistischen Elementen begangen, so werden aus dem Kreis der obengenannten Personen Kommunisten, ist die Tat von sonstigen irregulären Elementen begangen, so werden von den Obengenannten diejenigen, die diesen politisch nahestanden, von dem Gnadenurweis ausgeschlossen.

Es liegt deshalb in der Hand der nichtdeutschen Bevölkerung,

durch sofortige Festnahme

oder Veranlassung der Festnahme der Täter

oder durch Einwirkung auf ihnen bekannte irreguläre Elemente

oder durch Anzeigen verdächtiger Personen

dafür zu sorgen, dass das Urteil an den für einen Gnadenurweis in Aussicht genommenen Verurteilten nicht vollstreckt wird.

Warschau, den 12. November 1943

DER 44- UND POLIZEIFÜHRER
im Distrikt Warschau

BEKANNTMACHUNG OBWIESZCZENIE

Nach der Bekanntgabe der Sicherheitsbehörden sind am 17.11.1943 in Zyrardów 2 Personen erschossen und in Grodzisk noch 11 Personen in Vorbereitung der Erschossenen gegen die deutsche Kultur. Das sind 13.11.1943 und 14.11.1943.

Nach der Bekanntgabe der Sicherheitsbehörden sind am 17.11.1943 in Zyrardów 2 Personen erschossen und in Grodzisk noch 11 Personen in Vorbereitung der Erschossenen gegen die deutsche Kultur. Das sind 13.11.1943 und 14.11.1943.

1. Józef Józef	gł. w. 1.1.1911
2. Józef Józef	- 25.1.1915
3. Józef Józef	- 26.1.1919
4. Józef Józef	- 27.1.1920
5. Józef Józef	- 28.1.1924
6. Józef Józef	- 29.1.1929
7. Józef Józef	- 30.1.1931
8. Józef Józef	- 31.1.1935
9. Józef Józef	- 32.1.1939
10. Józef Józef	- 33.1.1943
11. Józef Józef	- 34.1.1947
12. Józef Józef	- 35.1.1951
13. Józef Józef	- 36.1.1955
14. Józef Józef	- 37.1.1959
15. Józef Józef	- 38.1.1963
16. Józef Józef	- 39.1.1967
17. Józef Józef	- 40.1.1971
18. Józef Józef	- 41.1.1975
19. Józef Józef	- 42.1.1979
20. Józef Józef	- 43.1.1983
21. Józef Józef	- 44.1.1987
22. Józef Józef	- 45.1.1991
23. Józef Józef	- 46.1.1995

24. Józef Józef	gł. w. 25.1.1910
25. Józef Józef	- 26.1.1915
26. Józef Józef	- 27.1.1920
27. Józef Józef	- 28.1.1924
28. Józef Józef	- 29.1.1929
29. Józef Józef	- 30.1.1931
30. Józef Józef	- 31.1.1935
31. Józef Józef	- 32.1.1939
32. Józef Józef	- 33.1.1943
33. Józef Józef	- 34.1.1947
34. Józef Józef	- 35.1.1951
35. Józef Józef	- 36.1.1955
36. Józef Józef	- 37.1.1959
37. Józef Józef	- 38.1.1963
38. Józef Józef	- 39.1.1967
39. Józef Józef	- 40.1.1971
40. Józef Józef	- 41.1.1975
41. Józef Józef	- 42.1.1979
42. Józef Józef	- 43.1.1983
43. Józef Józef	- 44.1.1987
44. Józef Józef	- 45.1.1991
45. Józef Józef	- 46.1.1995

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DER 11 UND POLIZEIWESEN
IN STADT WARSZAWA

BOWODCA 11 I POLICJI
NA STADT WARSZAWA

Umsiedlung in Sól und Zwardon

80040

B/1/2

*Sammelplatz der**ausgesiedelten Polen in Sól**Alttransport der Polen mit LKWs**Umsiedlungslab*

GROBMUSTERUNG DURCH DAS RUSS —HAUPTAMT—

Int. 2106 - 2/28/41



"Race examination" of
deported Poles

Transport of Poles from terri-
tories annexed by the Reich to
a camp in Łódź



— ABTRANSPORT —
DER AUSGESIEDELTEN POLEN
— NACH LITZMANNSTADT —

For this reason the operations in many localities took on a double nature, being partly deportations and partly "pacification" campaigns. Often round-ups would be organized in a particular place a few days before the actual deportation, and all males would be seized and expelled. One of the scenes of this type of action was the administrative district of Suchowola and it has been described by the head of the local administration:

"The deportations in Suchowola were carried out in two stages. During the first, on June 29, 1943, the Germans rounded up all the males between 13 and 60 in each of the villages. This action took place on the night of June 29-30, 1943. Special detachments of the German army made up of motorized and armoured units surrounded the villages. Some units took up positions to cut off all lines of escape; others entered the village to arrest the men. The villagers, taken by surprise, tried to escape by taking to hiding-places in the village, while anyone who had noticed troop movements earlier had run off to the nearby woods. Thorough searches were carried out in the buildings, in the fields and in parts of the woods. The soldiers walked about 5-10 metres apart. Where the corn was thick every metre was carefully searched. Planes flying low overhead stalked the people in the fields indicating them with smoke or else by diving. The Germans immediately rushed to the spot and took them away. People were manhandled, beaten and kicked. It was worse for anyone found hiding. Such a person was dealt with mercilessly, was treated as a 'bandit.' Generally, the inhabitants were driven to the end of the village and drawn up near the woods, where a strong detachment of troops was waiting armed with every type of weapon. This is where the worst things happened. The SS men, with the help of torture, tried to wring information out of some people as to how many 'bandits' there were in the village, and who possessed arms. No one would admit anything. People were taken one by one into the wood, stood up against a fir tree and

fired at to drag confessions out of them. This produced no results either. In the afternoon the men were loaded into lorries and taken away to the camps in Zamość and Zwierzyniec. After rounding up some of the men and terrorizing the rest, a smaller force of Germans carried out the deportations without any obstacles. This operation was carried out over the whole area on July 9, 1943. Everyone was deported — the old, mothers and children... a total of 2,730 persons (843 men, 1,041 women, 846 children). They were given from 10 to 30 minutes to assemble. In the course of the operation 21 persons were killed, 13 men, 5 women, 3 children)..."

The pacification actions consisted mainly of murder and the burning of houses. Because the numerous pacification actions in this area require special study, individual examples will not be cited.

These operations at one time reached such a pitch that the transit camp in Zamość was unable to take all the deportees and they had also to be sent to a similar camp in Zwierzyniec.

These deportations covered a total of 171 villages: 89 in Biłgoraj county (24 in June, 65 in July), 44 in Tomaszów county (1 in June, 43 in July), 29 in Zamość county (1 in June, 28 in July), and 8 in Hrubieszów county (all in July).

Because of the ruthlessness and brutality of these operations the villagers, supposing that their deportation was imminent, frequently ran away to the nearby woods or to some locality further off that was not included in the deportation action.

Not all the villages deserted in this way were settled with German colonists. In many cases they were repopulated with Ukrainians or even with Poles deported from other places. A number of villages, particularly in Biłgoraj county, were simply left abandoned. Whole villages stood empty stripped of their goods and property while the fields lay neglected. Sometimes the method followed was that villages surrounding an area settled by Germans were filled with Ukrainians so as to form a sort of wall round the German colonists which would

screen them from the Poles and particularly from operations by partisan units and also to channel the hatred of the expelled Poles not against the Germans but against the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians, for their part, incited by the Germans, in some cases not only kept pace but often even outstripped the Germans in acts of terror.

The deportations themselves were carried out in the same way as in the winter of 1942/43. Similarly, the conditions in the transit camps at Zamość and Zwierzyniec remained unchanged.

A certain number of the deportees were resettled in other localities, from which Poles had previously been evacuated. In many cases German colonists and Poles would be settled in the same village except that the Poles would be assigned the worst part of the village to live in and had to work as farm labourers for the Germans. Those deportees who were not kept for work in the Lublin district were either sent for forced labour in the Reich, placed in camps or deported to other districts.

Eventually, the continuously deteriorating situation on the front and the blows to security in the Government General dealt by the operations of the resistance movement, forced the authorities to call off the mass deportations in this area. As a result, immediate plans for German settlement, that is up to spring 1944, were confined to the towns of Zamość, Tomaszów Lubelski and Lublin. However, the retreat of the German army in the east and the increasingly effective partisan operation upset these plans as well as others for further deportations.

Nevertheless, in the course of the mass deportations between November 1941 and August 1943 the Germans evacuated about 110,000 people from 297 villages, taking all their property and condemning them to misery and often to death.

Germanization of Polish Children

The Nazi plans, discussed in the preceding chapters, envisaged various methods and stages in the campaign to wipe out the Polish nation. One of the forms this campaign took was the compulsory removal of Polish children to be Germanized; sometimes this was described as the "special treatment of racially valuable children."

Germanization of these children was intended on the one hand to help reduce and so eventually destroy the Polish nation and, on the other, to strengthen German blood and reinforce the German nation.

This was a deliberate measure worked out and elaborated in all its details in Berlin. In charge of it stood Himmler in his capacity as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. From him came the crucial instructions to be executed by the SS and police departments under him. The NSDAP authorities at various levels also took part in this action as did some of the highest organs of the national administration (The Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Justice) and local offices under them.

The following offices and organizations coming under Himmler were involved in this campaign:

An office later known as the General Staff Headquarters of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums-Stabshauptamt*) set up by Himmler and one of the

12 Main Departments of the SS; this was Himmler's executive organ as Reich Commissioner;

the Main Department for Race and Settlement (*SS Rasse-und-Siedlungs-Hauptamt*, abb. RuSHA) with local agencies in Łódź (*RuSHA Aussenstelle Litzmannstadt*) and representatives (*Führer in Rasse und Siedlungswesen*) at the offices of Higher SS and Police Leaders in the annexed territories, East Prussia and the Government General;

the Central Resettlement Office (*Umwandererzentralstelle* abb. UWZ) with branches, in Poznań, Łódź (sub-branch in Zamość), Gdańsk and Katowice coming under the chiefs of the Security Police and Security Service;

the Office for Resettlement of "ethnic" Germans (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, abb. VOMI), set up before the war;

The "Lebensborn" Association, formed in 1935 by Himmler, which later became one of the agencies of the Personal Staff of the Reichsführer SS (*Persönlicher Stab RF-SS Amt "L"*);

The institution of the "German Native Schools" (*Deutsche Heimschulen*), educational establishments created on Himmler's instructions in 1942.

Among the party agencies were the National Socialist Society of Social Welfare (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, abb. NSV), set up by Hitler in 1933 as one of the organs of the NSDAP.

Each of these bodies had its particular part to play in the campaign for Germanization of Polish children. A vital role was also entrusted to such departments as youth (*Jugendamt*), health (*Gesundheitsamt*), Labour (*Arbeitsamt*), social welfare (*Fürsorgeamt*), the courts, etc.

The Reich authorities had no delusions that the abduction and Germanization of Polish children could be justified by any lawful principles. They tried to conceal this crime not only from public opinion in other countries but even from the Germans themselves. For this reason they did everything possible to prevent information about this action leaking out. The

orders, instructions, etc., put out in this matter were not released and the majority of them were top secret or confidential. Nowhere did they use the term "Germanization of Polish children." The most frequent wording was "Re-Germanization" (*Wiedereindeutschung*). Polish children were often referred to as "children from the East" (*Ostkinder*), "children suitable for Germanization" (*Eindeutschungsfähige Kinder*), "racially valuable children" (*guttrassige Kinder*). Occasionally they were called "children of Polish families" (*Kinder polnischer Familien*) or "children of Poles" (*Polenkinder*). Sometimes, to improve the appearance of the whole action, such phrases as "Polonized German children" (*Polonisierte deutsche Kinder*), "children of German descent" (*Kinder deutscher Abstammung*) or "German orphans" (*deutsche Waisen Kinder*) were used.

The Germanizing action consisted of illegally abducting children from parents, guardians and orphanages or adopting children of parents who had been arrested or shot and handing them over to German parents or institutions in Germany and the annexed territories. Another method was to take adolescents of either sex to forced labour in the Reich and there subject them to a Germanization process.

Whether one of these kidnapped children was to be Germanized or not depended, on the results of a selection test to determine his racial value, character, ability and psychological qualities.

The course and scope of the abductions varied, as did the method used, in the annexed territories, the Government General, and the Reich. There were even local differences in the annexed territories — between the districts of Silesia, Poznań, Pomerania and Ciechanów. In principle these disparities stemmed from the varying attitude of the authorities to the local population. For instance, in Silesia the people were regarded as German and so their children were not taken away and sent to the Reich, except at the end of the war; the action was confined to taking over Polish orphanages and the removal only

of children whose parents had refused to be entered on the *Volksliste*. In the Poznań and Pomeranian districts children were removed and sent to the Reich. The same practice was followed in the Government General, except that the abductions were part of the mass deportations and pacification actions, the evacuation of children as the army pulled back on the eastern front, or the removal of children from schools towards the end of the war. In the Reich itself any children born to parents who had been deported for forced labour were taken away if they were regarded as racially valuable. -

The taking over of Polish orphanages was not started right after the annexation of the western territories and the taking over of the general administrative functions; this step only followed some time later. However, it had been prepared well in advance – in some localities (Bydgoszcz and Łódź, for example) as early as 1939. All that was done at the beginning was to register the children in these homes. It was not till 1940 that the individual orphanages were taken over. Time and method varied from area to area. Some orphanages were dissolved and the children transferred to an institution in the Reich; for example, the Bydgoszcz children were taken to a *Lebensborn* institution in Polczyn near Szczecinek.

Children living with adopted parents were to start with, generally left alone and the Germans confined themselves to checking that they were not coming under the “influence” of their Polish guardians. It was not till the issuance of an order on February 19, 1942 by SS Gruppenführer Greifelt, chief of the Headquarters of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood,* that the question of the removal and Germanization of children in orphanages or living with adopted parents was regulated.

This order stated that “there are a great number of children in Polish orphanages and living with adopted parents who,

* Order No. 67/I; Main Commission Records, DC 153/7x.

judging by their racial appearance, should be regarded as descended from Nordic parents." All these children should undergo racial and psychological tests; if these proved that the children had blood that was of value to Germanhood they should be Germanized. The order went on to specify how these tests should be conducted and where pure-bred children should be taken to be Germanized: between the ages of two and six they should be sent to *Lebensborn* institutions or to German families recommended by these institutions; between the ages of six and twelve they should be put in Native Schools after the completion of which they should be found homes with German families as fully-German children. Children whose parents lent themselves to Germanization should not be taken. The order did not omit to stress the need for camouflaging this whole business: "Special precautions must be taken to prevent the phrase 'Polish children suitable for Germanization' becoming publicly known; these children should be described as German orphans from the regained eastern territories." The reason given was that it might harm the child.

The order was put into effect; racial tests were begun and where indicated, children were removed from their adopted homes or from orphanages. There were even incidents of children being taken from their parents or from relatives who were bringing them up. In the cases of adopted children the tests were carried out by doctors from the Health Department with every precaution taken that neither the child nor the adopted parents realized the object of these tests. Appeals made after the removal of the child were either ignored or answered evasively. The guardians did not discover what had happened to the child and where it was until some time had elapsed and the child, by now in the Reich, found an opportunity to inform them secretly of its whereabouts.

At the beginning of 1945, as a result of the westward shift of the front and the consequent evacuation orders, a certain

number of children from orphanages were shipped deep into the Reich.

As far as the Government General was concerned this action was never undertaken on the same scale nor as systematically and thoroughly carried out as in the annexed territories. But there were cases of children being taken from orphanages or from their adopted homes. For example, the orphans in the Evangelical home on Karolkowa Street in Warsaw were sent to Piaseczno and in 1944 moved to Karlsbad.

Youth offices and party social welfare centres (NSV) drew up comprehensive lists of semi-orphaned and illegitimate children and children living with Polish guardians in the annexed territories. On the basis of these lists frequent checks were made to see if these children were not succumbing to the influences of their Polish environment. If it was discovered, for example, that a mother or guardian spoke Polish with the child, either the guardian was replaced by a German, sometimes by a court order, or the child was taken away and placed in a German institution or given to a German family. Illegitimate and semi-orphaned children, if racial tests proved positive, were placed in German institutions. In Poznań Province this action was carefully planned, with mothers as well as children undergoing racial tests; if the child was recognized as racially sound it was removed and sent to a *Lebensborn* centre in Austria via an institution in Kalisz.

Already during the early days of the occupation deportations were undertaken of Polish families from the annexed territories, particularly those who had settled there after the First World War, to the Government General. Only those people were left whom the Germans imagined would be suitable for Germanization. In their case the process of Germanization was facilitated by registering them on the German National Lists (*Volksliste*) with particular attention being paid to the children. Children recognized as racially valuable were subjected to Germanization usually by way of the *Volksliste*. If one of the par-

ents refused to be entered on the *Volksliste*, the children and the other parent were registered to enable the Germanization to be carried out. However, there were many cases when children were compulsorily removed from their parents. Even before the *Volksliste* was formally introduced, Himmler, in a decree of September 12, 1940, on examination and selection of people in the annexed territories, had given orders to remove children from parents who rejected "re-Germanization." Later (Feb. 16, 1942) these orders were extended to include parents who were considered "especially compromised politically." Even in cases where the parents had been put down in the fourth group of the *Volksliste*, this latter order of Himmler's called for the removal of their children if it turned out that the parents were exerting an "unfavourable influence" on their children's Germanization. They were then placed with German families and institutions. This order was later made to apply to persons in the third group as well. Thus, in some cases, even registration on the *Volksliste* did not protect parents from the abduction of their children.

In the Government General the procedure was similar in cases where parents, who had been recognized by the authorities as being of German descent, "refused to join the German national community." The children were then forcibly removed and placed with a German family in the Government General or sent to the Reich.

In the case of mixed marriages — that is where one of the parents was a German or Kusubian, Mazurian or Silesian — the parent of Polish origin was compelled to register on the *Volksliste*; if he refused, the other parent was forced to seek a divorce. As a rule the courts granted divorces in these cases or annulled the marriage with custody of the children invariably awarded to the German party. The principle was that the good of the child depended on a German upbringing. Judgments handed down by Polish courts up to September 1939 were even rescinded with custody of the child being transferred to the parent of German

descent or family. If this parent was dead the child was given either to a German family or a youth office.

A child could also be forcibly removed if his parents had been arrested, or deported to a concentration camp or for forced labour in the Reich, in such cases children were taken away even if they were living with relatives. The same thing happened with children whose parents had been executed.

This abduction of children reached massive proportions with the wholesale deportations of Poles from the Zamość area, the pacifications in that region and other parts of the Government General, and the evacuation actions as the German army retreated.

During the mass deportations from the Zamość area, described in the previous chapter, families were separated and the children forcibly removed. In the transit camps in Zamość, Lublin and Zwierzyniec "racial experts" from the RuSHA took the opportunity presented by the examinations of deportees to conduct selection tests on the children. The children who passed these tests were segregated and sent to the annexed territories or the Reich to be Germanized; there they were handed over to German families or placed in institutions. It is difficult to calculate how many of the 30,000 children deported from the Zamość area were removed for Germanization and how many were placed together with the aged and the sick in the *Rentendörfer*. Some idea can be had from a schedule of rail and road transports of children from the Zamość area drawn up by the Lublin Branch of the Main Guardianship Council. This only covered the period from July 7th to August 25th, 1943. During this period there were 29 transports of 4,454 Polish children between the ages of two and fourteen. They were sent to Świnoujście, Halle, Poznań, Strasshof (near Vienna), Lehrte, Wrocław, Bramsdorf, Stargard, Soest, Kelsterbach, Neumark, Wesel, Kartnen near Graz, Parchim, Breitigheim, and Brandenburg. Accounts given by the transport officers showed that these children were either handed over to German families or placed

in German institutions. The same procedure was followed with children whose parents had either been killed or sent to concentration camps during the pacification campaigns. Similarly, when the areas behind the retreating German army were being evacuated many children and juveniles were shipped deep into the Reich, except that the situation was so uncertain that there was not time to carry out racial tests, which were postponed until the children were in Germany. This action was known as *Heu-Aktion*.

In 1944 the Germans also began abducting children from schools in the Government General. Often as many as several dozen children would be taken from a single school. They were usually not even allowed to say goodbye to their parents or families; a trainload would be collected from the haul of several localities and after racial tests taken to the Reich.

Another method, used with older children, was to separate them from their families and send them off for forced labour in the Reich. It was mainly girls between the ages of fourteen to twenty who fell within the scope of this action; they were usually sent to the Reich as domestic help and there subjected to a process of Germanization. The areas round Poznań and Łódź were the main source. The girls had most often been picked up in street round-ups or supplied by labour and social welfare offices or the Central Resettlement Office. In this way the Nazis managed to combine exploitation of slave labour with Germanization.

All the aforementioned actions had been planned in Berlin and were carried out according to strictly prescribed directives. However, a large number of children were also taken away as the result of arbitrary police actions, raids, street round-ups, etc., which were not part of the Germanization plans. Nevertheless, these children too were sent to the Reich or subjected to Germanization or became Germanized as a result of the conditions in which they were forced to live. This.

for instance, is what happened to a number of children deported during the Warsaw Uprising.

All the actions so far described were carried out on Polish territory. But in the Reich itself Polish children were also removed for Germanization. This primarily concerned children born in Germany to Polish women who had been deported for forced labour. At first no special steps were taken with regard to pregnant "eastern workers" — who included Poles — and their offspring. There were even cases where pregnant women were sent back to their native country for the period of birth. However, since these pregnancies temporarily deprived the Germans of the full value of the women's labour and, moreover, seeing that the children born to them increased the biological strength of nations who did not belong to the *Herrenvolk*, measures began to be taken to stop this "unwelcome" fertility. This natural increase could be checked either by abortion or by removal of the offspring. But there were laws against abortion in force in the Reich. The Reich Minister of Justice, therefore, issued an order on March 9, 1943, waiving the penalties for abortion in the case of eastern workers who requested such an operation. If a woman refused to undergo this operation voluntarily it was simply forced on her. However, before the abortion was carried out the identity of the father had to be established and also whether the child would be "of good blood." Orders issued by Himmler on June 9, 1943, forbade abortion in cases where the father was of German descent and the child might be racially valuable. On July 27, 1943, further orders came from Himmler which extended this provision to fathers of blood close to German (*artsverwandten Blutes*), pointing out that the price paid in German blood for the war required that children produced by female workers of other nationalities be preserved for the German nation. These orders specified precisely the procedure to be followed in this type of case. The employer was to inform a youth office of pregnancies among his female workers; the office would then establish the identity of the parent

and experts from the RuSHA and health department would carry out racial tests on the parents. Children of parents who passed these tests would be put in the hands of the NSV which was then to hand them over to German families or to homes for racially valuable children (*Kinderheime für gutrassige Kinder*). Particularly good mothers from the racial point of view would be put in under the care of *Lebensborn* institutions and forbidden to take their children back to their own country. At the same time it was forbidden to tell the mothers what the object of these orders was. Mothers incapable of work and their racially worthless children were to be removed (*abgeschoben*); most probably this simply meant liquidation. It needs hardly be said that the mothers were not asked for their approval when their children were taken away.

A decree issued on June 5, 1944, by the Reich Minister of the Interior made the youth offices the official guardians of "racially sound" children born by female workers.

As far as abortion was concerned, no distinction was drawn between married and unmarried mothers.

In the Reich it was not only the children born there who were removed but also those who had arrived together with parents sent for forced labour (the children of parents deported from Volhynia for example).

What has been described so far was the abduction or adoption of Polish children as part of the Germanization campaign. However, the mere fact of abduction or adoption did not mean that the child would be necessarily Germanized. The touchstone was always result of the selection tests except in the case of children whose parents had refused to be registered on the *Volksliste*.

These selection tests consisted primarily of racial and medical examinations. These were followed by analyses of the child's character, ability and psychological qualities. The racial tests were conducted by specialists (*Eignungsprüfer*) from the Main Office for Race and Settlement of the SS or sometimes, as in

Łódź, by doctors from the health department. There were special forms for the tests which contained 62 points concerning the child's physique, shape and colour of the eyes, type of hair, etc. This detailed physical description of the child was used to establish its racial type. There were 11 racial types and two additional ones: negative and positive. The racial type having been established, the child was put into one of three categories:

1. "Desirable natural increase" (*erwünschter Bevölkerungszuwachs*)

2. "Tolerable natural increase" (*tragbarer Bevölkerungszuwachs*)

3. "Undesirable natural increase" (*unerwünschter Bevölkerungszuwachs*).

Children placed in the third category were not subjected to Germanization. This could have spelled a death sentence as a result of the bad conditions in the segregated places in which they had to live, for example, in concentration camps (the children of "bandits," children from the Zamość area put in category IV of the deportations from that region); or it could have meant sterilization if one of the parents was Jewish.

The racial classification was followed by psychological examinations and tests for character and intelligence. If it transpired from these that the child had "bad character or psychological propensities" it would be barred from the Germanizing process despite its good racial qualities. These tests continued even after the child had been handed over to a German family. It can be seen that the object was not to establish the German descent of the child but to choose children with good physical and mental qualities.

After the test but before they were sent off to the Reich the children underwent a preliminary Germanization in institutions specially set up for this purpose or in Polish homes taken over by the NSV. For the area of the Warta Region for example, childrens' homes of this sort were organized in Poznań, Ludwikowo, Puszczykowo and Bruczkowo. This latter home was

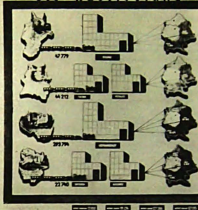
moved later to Kalisz where it went on functioning up to January 1945.

After a relatively short stay in these homes the children were sent to the Reich — to the "Native Schools" or to institutions run by the *Lebensborn*, SS and NSV, or to other establishments; here they underwent Germanization proper. First and foremost they were forbidden to speak Polish. If they were caught talking Polish they suffered severe punishments such as beating, starvation, etc. They were not allowed to have any contact with their parents. In fact, the children were told that their parents and families were dead. Every means was used to persuade the children that they were Germans. To this end they were drafted into youth organizations such as the *Hitlerjugend* or the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*. All traces of the children's Polish origin were removed; their names were replaced by German ones. Following an order issued by the head of the Race Office in the RuSHA the principle was to make the new name as close as possible to the old one in derivation and sound; if this was impossible the child was given one of the more common German names. It was the usual practice to keep the first two or three letters of the old name; for instance Kawczyński became Kancmann, Sosnowska — Sosemann, or it would be translated: Młynarczyk into Müller, Ogródowczyk into Gärtner, etc. Birth certificates and descent were changed and forged documents drawn up, particularly in the case of children taken during the pacification actions when neither the date nor the place of birth were known. The Germanization institutions also had special registration offices so as to prevent parents from being able to trace their children.

After staying in the Germanization institution the children were handed over to German families of confirmed National Socialist sympathies who were told that the youngsters were of German origin.

There was a great deal of reluctance to have these children legally adopted since the Germans were afraid that certain de-

Die Ausfiedlung



Zur Platzierung - für die Anfertigung der rückgeführten Volks - beauftragten werden Polen und Juden aus den einge - gebenen Örtlichkeiten ausgefiedelt und über die Ausfiedlungslager des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in das General - gouvemement geföhrt.

In der Zeit vom Oktober 1939 bis März 1941 wurden 408.525 Polen und Juden ausgefiedelt

German chart showing the results of the deportations from territories annexed by the Reich. In the bottom right-hand corner it is stated that 408,525 persons were deported between October 1939 and March 1941

Group of Polish boys in the Germanization camp for children in Dzierżazna near Łódź



ZAMOSC NACH AUSCHWITZ (MIT JE 1000 PPOLEN)
BEANTRAGT WURDEN UND AUCH ZUR VERFUEGUNG GESTELLT
WERDEN. ICH BITTE DAHER, DIE ARBEITEN SO,
D. H. ZURICHTEN, DASS DIE AKTION PROGRAMMGEMÄSS
...FAHIG KONTINUIERLICH ABLAUFEN KANN. --
2.) DIE BESPRECHUNG, UEBER DIE WIR BEREITS
VEREINBART WAREN, FINDET AM MITTWOCH, DEN 20.10.48
- 10.00 UHR IN HIES. DIENSTGEBÄUDE STATT.
EINGELADEN SIND: DER REICHSKOMMISSAR FUEHR DIE
FÖRDERUNG DEUTSCHEN VOLKSTUMS ROEM. 3 P -
ROEM. 4 D 2 - UND DAS AMT ROEM. 5 - DES RSHA.
(INTERPRINGUNG DER KINDER). -- ICH BITTE UM
TEILNAHME. --

RSHA - ROEM. 4 P 4 - 3666/42 KLEIN-G- (1505)
IA. GEZ. G U E N T H E P , SS- STURMF.

B E R I C H T

zu dem Transport von 14 Polen nach dem Arbeiter-
lager Auschwitz am 10.11.42.

Der Transport wurde am 10.11.42, 11.30 Uhr in Damrau auf dem
Feld gemacht. Die Abfahrt erfolgte am 11.11. in Warschau nach
Poznan War.
Von dem 14 Poln befanden sich insgesamt 14 Personen.
7 Frauen, und zwar:

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. K a t z | Marceline geb. Datzdorf, geb. 14.1.40 |
| " | John Gussien " 17.2.40 |
| 2. K a t z | Michalina " 15.1.40 |

Ergriffen auf offener Straße während einer Fahrgastübernahme
vor dem Vorkriegsbahnhof in Poznan mit Hilfe polnischer Infor-
manten, die die vorübergehende Lagerverhältnisse, die Plötz-
lichkeit selbst wurde durch die bevorstehende Dunkelheit beunruh-
igt und bewachte an den Aufbruch, so dass der Kontrollposten
sich an anderen Ende des Lagers befand. Die sofort eingeleitete
Inspektion blieb erfolglos. Die weiteren Befragten 11 Personen
kamen, sofern die bei der Verladung in Damrau erfolgte Zahlung
stimmte, aus dem fahrenden Zug aus und war aus dem oberen linken
der Überwagen gesprungen sein. Im wird deswegen vorgeschlagen,
Möglich die nicht mit ihnen verzeichneten Überstehen durch Stachel-
dräht zu sichern. Die Übernahme in Auschwitz erfolgte am 11.11.42
ohne besondere Verletzung fand nicht statt.

Die Durchführung des Transportes verlief abgesehen von der eigen-
mächtigen Entfernung der 14 Personen und ohne Instruktion
der Vernehmung, planmäßig.

Auftragsgemäß wurde mit dem Vertreter des Lagerkommandanten,
-Lagerführer K a t z, über die Chancen der Lager-
Formen und die Möglichkeit von den in den Transporten erschei-
nenden II-er Fällen gesprochen.

II-er Fälle betreffend wurde darauf hingewiesen, das nach An-
weisung von Instruktionseinstellung, die in Damrau einge-
liefert, seien Familienangehörige einer Gemeinschaft unterworfen

und den entsprechend in die zuständigen Gruppen aufgeteilt
werden. Durch die vorstehend angeführte Anweisung des HHL
ergibt sich ergänzungsweise die Tatsache, das zusätzlich gut aus-
gewählte Personen grundsätzlich aber nicht fahrgastgeordnet
sind mit der Vernehmungsgruppe II beauftragt werden. In solchen Fäl-
len sollten die als II-er Fälle zu betrachtenden Personen zunächst
überprüft und unter Instruktion ihrer arbeitssfähigen Leis-
tung den zuständigen II-Gruppenstellen zur Kontrolle gebracht wer-
den.

Arbeitsunfähigkeit befragt, erklärte SS-Untersturmführer
Kinnas, das nur arbeitsfähige Polen angestellt werden sollen
es somit möglich jede weitere Belastung des Lagers sowie des
Fahrgastverkehrs zu vermeiden. Beschränkte, Plötz, (Platz)
und Kranke Personen müssen in kürzester Zeit durch Identifikation
zur Identifikation des Lagers aus demselben entfernt werden.

Diese Personen findet aber insofern eine Durchsicht, so nach
Anweisung des HHL entgegen der bei den Polen angeordneten
Anweisung, Polen eines natürlichen Todes sterben müssen. Es wird
dieserhalb von der Lagerführung gewünscht, von der Identifikation
nicht einstelliger Abstand zu nehmen.

Der Lagerführer der nach Anweisung erstellten Polen, soll auf
ein Plötzchen beschränkt sein, d.h. den nach vorstehend verbrach-
ten Polen ist nur das Mittags, für die keine beständige Hand-
gehaltungsarbeiten, alle weiteren Gegenstände, wie Betten, Klei-
der, Schuhe, dürfen wegen Brandgefahr nicht in das Lager ein-
geführt werden und können während dem Lagerbestimmung darüber
auch keine Verwendung finden, da die Identifikation der Personen
eine gleichzeitige Ist. Es wird aus diesem Grund vorgeschlagen,
alle weiteren Identifikationen mit der Identifikation einer späteren
Durchsicht in Damrau zurückzuführen und nur anderweitigen Ver-
wendung zuständigen Dienststellen zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Erregung der Transporte betreffend, trifft die dortige Lager-
verwaltung bei Paragrafen durch SS Männer und Frauen getrennt
aufzuführen.

F. Kinnas
SS-Untersturmführer

tails might be revealed in court which would show that the children were of Polish origin.

The treatment of these children by the German families varied. Normally they told the child to call them "mother" and "father" and in many cases, their relations with these children whom they imagined to be German left nothing to be desired. But there were cases when the children were exploited at work and even beaten. It was worse if the parents learned that the child was of Polish origin; then it would be humiliated and mistreated on every occasion.

It is difficult to calculate exactly or even approximately the number of children who were Germanized, both those deported from Poland to the Reich and those actually born there. All that can be done is to give a few fragmentary figures which can serve to convey some idea of the scale on which this action was conducted in a particular period or in a particular area.

As already mentioned, the list drawn up by the Lublin Branch of the Chief Guardianship Council concerning children involved in the mass deportations from the Zamość area showed that between July 7 and August 25, 1943, 4,454 children were sent off to be Germanized.

The investigation of the case of Albert Forster, the ex-Gauleiter of Gdańsk and West Prussia, discovered that about 1,600 children were deported from this province for Germanization. However, these figures are not complete, since they do not cover the whole of the region.

What has survived of the records of the NSDAP organization for Silesia includes the figure of 3,000 children subjected to Germanization.

The records and files of the Occupation Youth Office in Łódź list about 12,000 children put under its legal custody. Of these at least 1,200 were deported to Germany, not counting children put in homes or handed over to German families.

The number of children living in Polish homes in the provinces of Poznań and Łódź (known as the Warta Region) amount-

ed in 1939 to 5,226. These children underwent selection tests and it has been established that over 50 per cent were found racially sound and so Germanized.

In the Reich itself in November 1942 there were 6,818 Polish girls "suitable for Germanization" who had been deported there for forced labour and were working as domestic help in German families.

After the war, in connection with attempts being made to secure the return of Polish children from occupied Germany, German officials handed over to the American and British authorities about 40,000 birth certificates of children born to Polish women in the former Reich.

In the trial of officials of the Main Office for Race and Settlement of the SS before the American Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (Case VIII) it was found that there had been about 92,000 children in the *Lebensborn* institutions. As already mentioned from Nazi documents it is known that Polish children who were to be Germanized were also sent to these institutions.

Atrocities During the Warsaw Uprising

“When I heard the news about the uprising in Warsaw I immediately went to the Führer... I said: ‘My Führer, it is not a good time for us. But from the historical point of view it is a blessing that the Poles are doing this. After five, six weeks we will extricate ourselves from this business. And then Warsaw, the capital, the head, the brain of this former nation of 16 or 17 millions will be destroyed, this nation that for 700 years has been for us the barrier to the East and ever since the first battle of Tannenberg has stood in our path. Then the historical Polish problem will cease to be a major problem for our children and for all those who follow us — indeed even for us ourselves.’ Then I also issued an order for the complete destruction of Warsaw it read: ‘Every block of houses must be burned and blown up’... I have somewhat digressed from the subject of Warsaw, this huge city which will no longer exist...”*

This is taken from a speech made by Himmler on September 21, 1944, in Jägerhöhe to the heads of the military areas and the commandants of the training schools; it was the sentence passed on Warsaw.

Throughout the occupation, Warsaw, as the largest concentration of people in Poland, continued to be the capital, not in the formal sense, but as the centre of the national and political

* Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, Records 1101 z/II t. 17.

consciousness and the heart of the conspiratorial political, cultural and intellectual life of the whole nation. It was also the capital of the resistance organizations, whatever their political shading.

The Nazi authorities were fully aware of this and so the repression and terror used against the whole nation was particularly fierce in Warsaw. The object of this vicious and systematic campaign was to intimidate the whole nation by terrorizing the capital, to destroy the leading and most active section of the population. In the very first months of the occupation there were mass executions in Warsaw; the terror reached its peak in 1943-44, while during the Uprising it can only be described as the outright slaughter of innocent civilians.

It was not only the people of Warsaw themselves who suffered. The authorities were anxious to deprive the city itself of its leading position as the capital of the Polish nation, turn it into a minor provincial town and finally destroy it. These intentions were realized in part in the spring of 1943 when a whole district disappeared with the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto; the enormity of devastating the whole city followed during and after the Uprising when the Germans drove out the inhabitants and plundered anything of the slightest value.

When the Uprising broke out on August 1, 1944, the local authorities did not realize the extent of this operation by the Resistance and assumed that the SS, police and gendarmerie units stationed in Warsaw would be able to put it down. However, when a few hours later they found that the revolt was organized and led on military lines, that almost the whole of Warsaw was involved and the insurgents were attacking successfully and capturing streets and even whole districts, the authorities called in the Wehrmacht garrison under the command of Major-General Stahel of the Luftwaffe, who had been made military commander (*Kampfkommandant*) of Warsaw at the end of July 1944 in connection with the situation on the eastern front.

When Hitler heard of the uprising, he issued orders that it was to be crushed ruthlessly and that Warsaw was to be razed to the ground. Although a written copy of this order has never been discovered, its existence was attested after the war by Generals von dem Bach and Ernst Rode* and other officers (for example, Helmut Wagner, leader of one of the platoons of the SS Dirlewanger Brigade). The order was passed on to units of the Wehrmacht by the Army General Staff and to the SS, police and gendarmerie detachments by Himmler; the units of other nationalities (the Kamiński brigade and the "Vlasovites") in the pay of the Nazis received their orders from one or the other, depending on whether they were attached to the Wehrmacht or the SS.

To suppress the uprising quickly Himmler sent in the SS Dirlewanger Brigade, which was recruited from condemned criminals; SS Oberführer Dirlewanger, its commander, was given orders to murder the population and destroy Warsaw. This brigade was already notorious for the atrocities it had committed against civilians in the east during its operations against the partisans. Himmler also called up the brigade of SS General Bronisław Kamiński, a collection of traitors and renegades, sometimes known as the "Ukrainians," which had also butchered its way through anti-partisan campaigns in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union. In addition, SS Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth, the Higher SS and Police Leader of the Warta Region, had been ordered to organize a combat group from the Wehrmacht, SS and police units stationed in Poznań for action in Warsaw.

These units arrived on August 4, 1944, on the western outskirts of the city (the district of Wola) and were merged into the

* Rode cross-examined by American counsel at Nuremberg on August 14, 1946, testified that the order said: "Warsaw is to be levelled, the uprising is to be suppressed ruthlessly." Document NI-468. Main Commission Records 1101 z/II t. 15.

“Reinefarth Combat Group” (*Kampfgruppe Reinefarth*). On August 5th they attacked Wola.

General Guderian, the chief of the army staff, moved units of the Wehrmacht and the “Vlasovites” into Warsaw at the appeal of Governor General Frank who was alarmed that the revolt might spread to the whole of the Government General.

All the troops deployed to suppress the Uprising were merged into the *Korpsgruppe von dem Bach* under the command of SS Obergruppenführer and Waffen SS and Police General Erich von dem Bach-Żelewski, leader of the anti-partisan units (*Chef der Bandenkampfverbände*). This corps was put under the headquarters of the 9th Army (General Nicolaus Vormann and his second-in-command General Smilo von Lüttwitz) which was part of the “Centre” army group (General Model, and later General Reinehardt).

The *Korpsgruppe von dem Bach* was made up of:

1. The Reinefarth Combat Group – with the shock troops (*Angriffsgruppe*) of SS Obergruppenführer Dirlewanger, Major Reck and Colonel Schmidt, and reserve and rearguard units. This group struck through Wola towards Victory Square and on to the Vistula, the Old Town, Powiśle and Czerniaków.

2. The Combat Group of Major-General Rohr – made up of Wehrmacht units, Warsaw SS and police units, the Kamiński Brigade and other smaller units. They operated in Ochota, Mokotów, around Unia Lubelska Square (Szucha Avenue – the so-called police district), Czerniaków and Powiśle.

3. The Combat Group of the Wehrmacht garrison under Major-General Stahel operating around Victory Square.

In addition, at the beginning of the Uprising there were units from the Hermann Göring armoured division; at the end of September, the 9th Army sent in the 19th armoured division of general Hans Källner and Luftwaffe squadrons under General Ritter von Greim.

The troops used against the Uprising were made up of at least 300 different units, some of them only in platoon strength, be-

longing to the Wehrmacht, SS police, foreign mercenary corps, the SA, the *Werkschutz*, railwaymen, post-office workers, etc.*

The atrocities committed during the Uprising, because of their extent and ferocity, form a separate chapter in the grim chronicle of Nazi crimes in Poland. The victims were mostly innocent civilians, regardless of age and sex, who had taken no part in the partisan operations. The crimes were various. The biggest toll was taken by the meticulously planned mass executions in which machine-guns, small arms and grenades were used and the victims were first robbed of their valuables. When the Germans were setting fire to the city, there were incidents of people being thrown into the flames alive. It was not only personal property that suffered at German hands; they looted and wrecked the equipment of hospitals, old people's homes, public institutions, etc. Patients in hospitals, old women and young girls were brutally raped. The demolition of the city was carried out systematically, with some districts being burned and blown up house by house. Many of the insurgents captured during the fighting were murdered, and among these were Polish and Soviet prisoners-of-war.

It is difficult to give an account of all the atrocities, since in many cases there were no survivors and the authorities did their best to wipe out the traces of their butchery by burning the corpses and anything that might later be a clue to the number killed.

Evidence of these crimes has come primarily from eye-witnesses who miraculously managed to escape a particular massacre and from people who were forced to carry out some job in a given area and saw the place of execution and its victims — for example, men from the *Verbrennungskommando* employed to burn the bodies of those murdered. The scope of this book however makes it impossible to describe all these crimes, which

* General Vormann's report to the headquarters of the "centre" army group on September 18, 1944.

could not even be excused on the grounds of military necessity; there is room only for the biggest and most brutal atrocities committed in several districts of the city.

The greatest number of shootings, which were really nothing but mass slaughter, took place in Wola.

On August 1, 1944, the insurgents did not succeed either in getting control of the whole district or in seizing all their objectives. In the first place, Wola being on the outskirts of the city, contained a large number of factories and so was heavily guarded by the Wehrmacht and units of the regular industrial defence organization such as the *Werkschutz* and *Bahnschutz*. In addition, the main east-west highway ran through Wola, and down it there passed regular convoys of troops to the eastern front. To this had to be added the insurgents' lack of equipment, the Germans' considerable superiority in fire power and reverses in Koło, Urlichów and Boernerowo; as a result of all this the Poles could only gain control of the centre of Wola, which was nearer the city centre, with most of the area still in German hands. For the civilians, this first day on the whole passed quietly.

On the second day the Germans, supported by tanks, counter-attacked and pushed the insurgents back from Magistracka, Zagłoba and Zawisza streets. They began burning the houses they took while the residents were herded into the streets, and many were killed by bullets or grenades. An eye-witness of the slaughter on Zawisza Street described it later in court:

"On August 2, the insurgents pulled back from their positions. The Germans entered our building through the garden from the Magistracka Street side. There were ten German soldiers and Ukrainians armed with grenades. At the time, I was standing in a group of 18 men and about ten women at the foot of the stairs. The Germans ordered us all to go outside. At the same time two of the Germans led one of the occupants of our house – Marian Kowalski – out of the downstairs flat; in the garden a soldier shot him in the back of the head killing him on the

spot. Then about 18 of us men were stood in the corner of the garden between the front of the house and the annex. The women, standing in the courtyard, were allowed to go out into the street. Then on the orders of a German, one of the Ukrainians threw two grenades at us. After the first we all threw ourselves onto the ground and I heard the death cries of those lying around me. After the second grenade there was silence, and I realized that everyone had been killed. I was wounded in the face and left arm but did not lose consciousness. As I lay on the ground I saw the Germans moving about the house and dragging out all the men still inside. I saw one of the Ukrainians lead out a 77-year-old man who lived in the house, propel him to where we were lying and shoot him in the face with his revolver. The old man fell dead. Then the same Ukrainian led out four other tenants (one of them was Józef Woźniak; I did not know the names of the others) and shot them in the face, one after the other, near where I was lying. Then the Germans and Ukrainians left our place. I picked myself up and saw that my companions were all lying dead; most of them had had their heads blown off and their brains were spattered... All of them simply lived in the house, all were civilians who had not taken part in the Uprising.”*

In other streets too, the strongholds and barricades of the insurgents were attacked, with the Germans often using the civilians as a human rampart against the insurgents' fire. People were dragged out of their homes, some of the women and children were sent to the Church of St. Wojciech, and a number of the men were forced to dismantle the barricades; the houses were set on fire. Many persons were shot and women were freely raped.

On the third and fourth day the attack continued, mainly with the support of tanks, driving the insurgents from their positions

* Testimony of Kazimierz Szajewski, Main Commission Records 1100 2/V p. 968.

all the way to Młynarska Street. Civilians were often driven in front of the tanks as cover. A large number of people, most of them young men, were shot and houses were systematically set on fire.

However, the slaughter of these four days cannot be described as a mass extermination action despite the number of civilians who perished.

In the morning of August 5 the Reinefarth Combat Group, the Wehrmacht units and the Vlasovites from the 9th Army, all of whom had arrived the preceding day, went into action alongside the local units. There was fierce fighting all day along Młynarska Street.

In the areas already taken, where there was no fighting, the Germans began a deliberate action of murdering civilians and prisoners, and leveling the buildings, in obedience to Hitler's and Himmler's orders to destroy the city and kill its inhabitants.

After surrounding the whole area, detachments of troops burst into the houses and drove out the residents into the courtyards. Rifle fire and grenades were poured into the gateways, cellars, windows and courtyards. Those who were too slow to get out of the houses or tried to shelter in cellars or attics were killed on the spot. After the houses were cleared and looted, they were set on fire. The people gathered in the courtyards were robbed of the valuables and effects they had managed to save, and then grenaded or shot. Sometimes the victims were herded into cellars and grenades were thrown into them. Anyone who showed any signs of life after the executions, was finished off. No distinction was made as to age, sex, occupation or health.

These were the "minor" executions; but there was also mass murder in specially chosen places like public squares, factory yards, the ruins of burned-out houses, etc. All day long successions of people were herded into them from various blocks and streets and shot with machine guns or small arms. In this way the Germans murdered whole families and the occupants of

separate houses, blocks and streets. The bodies piled up to a height of several metres. A number of corpses were burned together with the houses. To rub out the traces of these appalling crimes a special brigade of workers was formed from Polish men who were forced to dump the bodies in one place, pour some inflammable liquid over them and set fire to these massive pyres. This operation went on for several days. After the war several such sites were found where there had been a mass burning of bodies and in some of them a large amount of ash and charred bones was found.

One of the mass execution sites was the square bordering on the railings of Sowiński Park (1/3 Elekcyjna Street). The execution went on from 10 a. m. until the late evening. The victims were the occupants of houses at 129 and 132 Wolska Street, 1/3, 4, 6 and 8 Elekcyjna Street, and on Ordon Street. They were brought to the place of execution in groups, the women and children separated from the men and shot with machine guns mounted facing the railings. After each shooting the wounded were finished off and a new group was lined up. After the execution was over the bodies were taken into Sowiński Park and burned, with the ashes buried in two graves. There is an affidavit describing this execution from an eye-witness, Wacława Szlachta:*

"On August 5, 1944 at 10 a.m. a squad of German troops burst into the courtyard of our house. The soldiers were similarly uniformed to those who had carried out a search the night before. We were told in the house that it was the gendarmerie. There were several dozen of them, they talked German and were armed with sub-machine guns and grenades. Our house was a large one and there were over 150 apartments in it. The landlord, Józef Hankiewicz, had told me that before the Uprising there had been over 600 tenants. I do not know exactly how many people there were in our house on August 5, but at a rough

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 981.

calculation I would say that over 500 people came out of the house. They included men, women and children. A few sick people stayed behind: the chemist Danowski, a woman whose name I cannot remember and a group of people who hid in the garden at the back of the house. I heard later that the group in the garden were shot on Ordon Street. I do not know what happened to the people in bed; all I do know is that so far there has been no trace of either the chemist or the woman. I went out with my husband, Michał, b. 1895, my sons, Józef, b. 1921, and Marian, b. 1923, and my daughters, Lucyna, b. 1926, and Alina, b. 1928. We went out into the courtyard where the gendarmes told us and the other occupants to go out on Wolska Street, cross the road and stop by Sowiński Park. Men were separated from the women, and boys of about fourteen were removed from their mothers; we were drawn up against the railings of Sowiński Park in a line from the gate towards Elekcyjna Street as far as the site of the stone cross. Women and small children stood between the gate and the seventh post of the railings counting from the gate, then came the boys and men. Standing by the railings I saw that a machine gun had been mounted on the pavement of Wolska Street, just at the corner of our house, at the corner of Wolska and Ordon streets. A second machine gun was standing under a tree (which is still there) in front of our house, about 10 metres away from Ordon Street in the direction of Prądyński Street. A bit further away I saw a third machine gun, but I do not remember today the exact place. All I know is that it was on Wolska Street, near our house, closer to Prądyński Street. The German soldiers opened fire on us with these machine guns. I did not recognize the squad of soldiers who fired and I cannot describe their uniforms. I heard shouts in German from their direction. I fell to the ground by the second post of the railings, counting from the gate. I was unhit. Bodies fell across my legs. My youngest daughter Alina was lying next to me still alive. Lying on the pavement I could see and hear the German soldiers walking

among those on the ground and kicking them to see if anyone was alive. Those who were, they finished off with one shot from their revolvers. I was on my stomach but my head was propped on a food basket and so I could more or less make out what was happening. In this way I was able to see a German soldier (I do not know what unit he was from) kick the woman next to me who was still alive and then shoot her. Then I saw him move to a pram in which the several months-old twins of my neighbour, Jakubczyk, were lying and shoot them. All the time I could hear the groans of the dying. I learned later that immediately after us the Germans shot the occupants of the courthouse on Elekcyjna 1/3 (corner of Wolska)... After lunch — I do not know the time exactly — a German finished off my daughter Alina. I lay there till evening. At about 8 p.m., maybe a little earlier, at any rate the sun was going down, a German soldier ordered everyone who was alive to stand up and said that they would not be shot. Later I realized and was told by others that the man who had told us to stand up was a gendarme. He said that some of us had been shot because there was a revolution in Warsaw. Out of the group from our house, five women including me and five children got up..."

Another scene of slaughter was the open space in front of the forge at 120-124 Wolska Street. Here the occupants of Nos. 112-126 and 113-127 Wolska Street were shot. In the morning of August 5 units of the SS, gendarmerie and "Vlasovites" sealed off Wolska Street and from 10 a.m. began brutally dragging out the occupants of the houses, and, while yelling and shooting herded them into the open space in front of the forge and told them all to lie down. When it was full of people they opened fire with machine guns and small arms and threw grenades. After shooting one group and finishing off the wounded, a second was gathered and murdered in the same way. The execution went on till about 6 p.m. When it was over, a large number of wounded were finished off by the gendarmes, and Poles from the *Verbrennungskommando* piled the corpses into

two heaps about 20 × 15 metres which were then burned. A description of this execution appeared in an affidavit made by an eye-witness, Jan Grabowski:*

“Between 10 and 11 a.m. of August 5, 1944, about 100 German gendarmes entered the courtyard and drew up in a gauntlet from the courtyard into Wolska Street, all the way to the forge which was situated further up the street, at No. 124, almost opposite our house. They were all armed with sub-machine guns, rifles with fixed bayonets and grenades. In the courtyard they shouted for us to come out of the house. Men, women and children came out and all were driven to the open space by the forge. I came out with my wife, Franciszka, aged 33, my daughter Irena, 4, and my son Zdzisław, 5 months. In the open space in front of the forge we were all told to lie down. The group from our house numbered about 500. By the time I arrived with my family in front of the forge, there were already a number of people either from our house or from others lying on the ground. As I lay I saw a machine gun being mounted on the site of a burned-out house about 5 or 10 metres from the people on the ground. Suddenly the Germans opened fire with this machine gun and sub-machine guns and threw grenades into the crowd of people lying on the ground. After a little while the firing stopped and the Germans brought up another group. I heard some women among the newcomers ask “what house are you from?” but I did not hear the answer and I do not know from what house these persons had been collected. I did not notice how many there were in this group. These people lay down in the open space and the shooting started again, and with intervals, for finishing off those who were still alive, went on for at least 6 hours. A gendarme trampled over me; I myself was unwounded, my wife and children had been killed. I heard the gendarme give an order to shoot my 5-month-old son, who was crying, after which I heard a shot and the child was silent...

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1019.

Lying on the ground I pretended to be dead; after some time the shooting stopped and solitary gendarmes moved around those on the ground finishing off, as I described, those who were still alive; a gendarme stamped over me three times. Then I heard something said in Polish and I thought that the gendarmes had gone; however, I realized that these were Polish workers brought by the Germans to remove the cases and bundles of the victims. After some time the same group of workers returned to take away the bodies; behind them came the gendarmes who were still finishing off anyone who moved or showed any other sign of life. Then I heard the Polish workers call out that anyone who was still alive should get up and that he would not be killed, that some German had arrived with these orders. I did not believe this and stayed on the ground until the workers removing the bodies came for me. Then I got up, helped the workers carry a body and went on doing this till the job was over. We piled up the bodies in two heaps, and continued carrying them until dusk. One pile was 20 metres long, the other about 15 metres; their width was about 10 metres and height up to 1½ metres (as high as the bodies could be thrown)..."

In the "Ursus" factory yard at 55 Wolska Street, on the corner of Skierniewicka Street, units of the SS, gendarmerie and "Vlasovites" butchered civilians taken from the houses on Płocka, Działdowska, Wolska, Sokołowska, Skierniewicka and Wawelberg streets. Amid shouting, beating and shots, groups of people were lined up against the factory walls where they were robbed of their baggage, valuables and money. By the gate itself they were divided into threes and fours and every so often the gate would open and a number of these groups would be pushed inside. Between the gate and the execution site there was a gauntlet of SS men and Vlasovites. Soldiers followed each group, pushed into the yard, and shot them in the back of the head at the execution site. After the shooting of each group the wounded were finished off. These executions

lasted till late evening. In the factory yard there were piles of dead about 20 metres long and 2 metres high. The bodies of the murdered victims were burned a few days after the execution. Only a few of those shot managed to save their lives. One of them, Zofia Staworzyńska, has described this slaughter in an affidavit.*

"I had been living in Warsaw since 1941 at 18 Wawelberg Street, flat 20... At about 1 p.m. on August 5, 1944, SS men and Ukrainians entered our courtyard and ordered all the occupants to leave the house immediately. There was a terrible commotion and scramble. Those who came out, including children, had to walk with their hands above their heads. Together with my daughter Alina, 11, I left the house with the other occupants, numbering about 150 persons. The Germans marched us along Działdowska Street towards Wolska Street. The houses on either side of the street had already been burned and their occupants driven out. On Wolska Street the Germans halted us in front of the gates of the 'Ursus' factory, which was a branch of a factory in the town of Ursus. Apart from our group I saw no Poles in front of the gates, but there was a large number of SS men, Ukrainians and lorries. In front of the gates we were drawn up by families. The gates were open, and when I looked in, I saw heaps of bodies in the courtyard, civilians and Ukrainians. I heard shots and screams. I realized that the same fate was awaiting us. All the while the Germans were driving Poles inside by groups, and after about an hour's wait it was my turn. I went inside with my daughter and two children who had attached themselves to me (Krystyna Kaczmarek whose parents had been out and Zygmunt Urlich whose parents and 3-month-old brother had been shot outside the gates). In the courtyard, as soon as we entered the gate, we began stumbling over piles of bodies while under the left wall and by the side of the factory the bodies were lying heaped one on top of

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1034.

WÄHREND DES KRIEGES DEN ENDBECKEN ZULETZE
SOWEIT NICHT MILITÄRISCHE BELANGE DES FESTUNGSGEBIETS
ERZIEHUNGSWEISEN, VOR DEM ABREISEN SOLLEN AUS WARSCHAU
ALLE KUNSTSTOFFE, ALLE TEXTILFASERN UND ALLE WERKE
GERÄUMT WERDEN. DIE HAUPTAUFGABE FÄLLT DEN ZIVIL
VERWALTUNG ZU. -

ICH GEHE HIERVON KENNNTNIS, DA DIESER MEINE FÜHRERBEFEHLE
UNTER DIE NIEDERLEGUNG WARSCHAUS FÜR DIE WEITERE DEUTSCHE
POLENPOLITIK VON GROSSTER BEDUTUNG IST. - - -

DER GOVERNOR DES DISTR. WARSCHAU.

7. ZT. SICHACZEY. -

67. DR. FISCHER.

Second sheet of the tele-
gram

F. d. i.:

Feldpostamt

47 RD FÜR WARSCHAU RD. 1706/1707 17.10.44 1945

Bonfire made of corpses
during the Uprising

BILDKARTEI

ALFRED MENSEBACH
LITHA (BRITANNISCHES)

LAND: Polen
GEB.:
ORT: Warschau
Stabschef

KLASSE: 7
ARTIKEL: 49
GRUPPE:

3397

22/22

FOTOGRAF

SAISON: Sommer
ALFRED MENSEBACH
ORT: Warschau
DATUM: 24.12.44

VERHALTEN VON

NAMEN:
ORT:
STRASSE:
DATUM:





The ruins of Warsaw

the other in various positions. Behind each person pushed into the yard there followed an SS man and Ukrainian who shot them in the back of the head with a revolver. I turned to a Ukrainian who was stroking my daughter's hair and begged him to let us go. The Ukrainian then turned to his colleague and repeated my appeal in Polish. However, he refused to agree pointing at us and saying something about *polnische Banditen*. My daughter took my hand and we walked in the direction of the wall. When we were by the wall shots were fired at us. The first shot hit me in the neck. I fell and was hit three more times, once in the arm and twice near the heart. My daughter fell next to me, I heard another shot almost immediately, after which my daughter lay still. All the while more groups of Poles were being brought in, but I do not know how often. I do not know how long this went on since I was completely delirious. In the intervals between the shootings and just before evening the SS men and Ukrainian moved around finishing off the wounded (they finished off my daughter and the person lying next to me) and removing their jewellery. Trampling over me they broke my left arm (the one where I was wounded) and my right collar bone, and tore my ring off my fingers.

"In the evening everything grew quiet... The next day (Sunday) I got up and looking around me walked over the site. I counted the bodies lying in the yard, there were about 6,000. There were no Germans or Ukrainians in the yard."

In the Franaszek factory at 43 Wolska Street, the Germans shot a large number of civilians from neighbouring streets who in the first days of the Uprising had taken refuge in the concrete air-raid shelters belonging to the factory. Some of the people from the factory — a group of about 200, mainly women and children — were taken to the tram depot at 2 Młynarska Street and there, together with people brought from Młynarska Street, were shot. In an affidavit Janina Rozińska, one of the survivors of the 200 from the Franaszek factory described the execution.*

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1056.

"In the confusion people were running around blindly and the SS men were driving those running down Wolska Street towards the tram depot on Młynarska... In the tram depot I found myself together with my children among a crowd of about 200 persons, mainly women and children and pregnant women who had been driven here from the Franaszek factory shelter and Wolska Street. The group stood crushed together on Młynarska Street by the depot lavatories. Around the group stood about 40 SS soldiers and soldiers in uniforms which did not have the SS emblem. Nearby there stood a machine gun, but I cannot describe just where because of all the things passing through my mind at the time. The Germans opened fire from the machine gun on our huddled group. After the first bursts the wounded began to pick themselves up from among the mass on the ground whereupon the Germans threw hand grenades into the throng. I saw one of the pregnant women who had been wounded in the belly spew out her child and one of the Germans come up, take the living infant and, laying it on a piece of iron, stab it with a bit of wire. I was by the wall of the lavatories with my children. My son had been badly wounded in the first burst in the back of the head. I had been wounded by a grenade in both legs and stomach. My daughter had been wounded in the legs, stomach and chest. When everyone in the group had fallen, the Germans stood in front of us and began firing at the wounded when they tried to get up or moved. Until dusk the Germans went on moving around those on the ground, firing at anyone who stirred and joking and laughing when he was hit. At dusk I managed to crawl into the lavatories with my son and daughter and with 16-year-old Jadwiga Perkowska who was wounded in the leg. My son was only barely alive..."

Another large group of civilians was shot in a small open space, on the corner of Górczewska and Zagłoba streets, surrounded by burning houses. This group had previously been driven from the streets in the area into a locomotive factory

on Moczydło Street. Among them were doctors, hospital attendants and patients from Wola Hospital on Płocka Street. After robbing them of their effects the Germans took them in groups of varying size to the site on Górczewska Street and there shot them. When the yard piled up with bodies, the victims were forced to climb up on top of them and were shot there. The shooting went on until the late evening. When night fell a few of the wounded managed to scramble out of the pile of bodies. One of these witnesses, Father Bernard Filipiuk, has described the slaughter in an affidavit:

“When the Uprising broke out I was in Wola Hospital following an operation... On August 5 the Germans again entered the hospital, this time in a larger number, filling the hall and corridors. Among them were Ukrainians and Georgians with ‘Georgen’ written on their armbands. These were the frontline troops making up the Eastern legions in the service of the Germans. At about 1 p.m. a German officer with two SS men entered the office of the hospital’s director, Dr. Piasecki, who was there with Dr. Zejland and the hospital chaplain. After asking who was the doctor in charge and who the other two were, the officer personally shot all three of them... After we had all been forced to leave the hospital we were taken under close escort along Płocka Street towards the railway viaduct. As we made our way down Górczewska Street I saw that there were bodies lying outside every house. In front of some of the houses there were the charred bodies of children, women, men and old people. All the houses had been burned. Just past the railway viaduct I saw a great many Polish men, women and even children lying around the parapet and among them suitcases, briefcases and other baggage. On the parapet on the other side stood a machine gun which had presumably been used to shoot these people. We were ordered to turn left – I think into Magistracka Street – and led along the railway line into the yard of some factory. We were crowded into the factory’s two large shops and told to squat on the ground.

After a while a large batch of persons was brought in — from Działdowska Street, the houses on Wawelberg and other streets, I gathered. Soon afterwards a group of men and women arrived in a number of lorries. The factory was so congested that there was no room for anyone to sit. Between 2 and 3 p. m. some Gestapo men entered the factory and straightaway began picking out anyone who looked fit. They were taken outside, drawn up in fours and marched off somewhere under heavy escort. The Gestapo men announced that they had been taken off to dismantle the barricades. This selection of the fit went on until about 4 p. m. At about 4.30–5 p. m. the Gestapo men took the first batch of sick people from the factory. Not long afterwards they came for a second batch which included me. We were taken to the factory yard and drawn up in fours in groups of twelve. I counted six such groups of twelve in the batch of people among whom I was. The Gestapo men told us to hand over our watches, rings, fountain pens and anything else of value. They placed these articles on some upturned packing case. I saw a very large number of watches and other bits and pieces on this case. I myself put my watch and fountain pen in the bottom packet of my cassock and did not hand them over, thinking the watch might enable my family to identify my body. We were sure that we were going to our death just like the preceding batch from the factory. I was wearing my cassock and the slippers which the nurse had taken from my room in the hospital after I had gone and given to me in the factory. We were led back along the same street by the railway line down which we had marched to the factory in the direction of the viaduct. Along the whole route soldiers were posted on both sides of the street at intervals of about ten metres with their rifles covering us. In addition, each twelve was escorted by Gestapo men with drawn revolvers. We were taken across Górczewska Street to the other side just by the railway line. I think it was No. 35 because that is what I was told a year later in

hospital. This was on the right side of Górczewska Street just next to the railway track, but beyond it coming from Płocka Street. Today a memorial cross marks the spot. The place of execution was a large courtyard with the railway tracks on the right, a burning house opposite and another burning building on the left. When we entered the courtyard we found there were a few of the groups of twelve that had been taken from among the sick and healthy in the factory before us, still awaiting their death. I furtively took the watch out of the deep pocket of my cassock and saw that it was 7.30. The twelves were continuously being taken and shot. The order to fire was given by a Gestapo man. Three soldiers with riot guns were standing at the front of the courtyard and fired when given the order. I walked past them and distinctly saw that all three were wearing German uniforms and that one of them seemed to have a Mongoloid face. I do not know if they were Germans or some other nationality. I stood in the courtyard for perhaps 15 to 20 minutes and clearly saw each group of twelve in front of me executed by being shot in the back. I also saw the Gestapo man after each burst finish off the wounded with his revolver, shooting them in the head. About three-quarters of the courtyard was now covered with bodies and some of those by the blazing buildings were burning. As we waited for our imminent death, Father Żychoń, a missionary from Cracow who had been a patient in the hospital, gave us all general absolution and then I heard his confession, after which, at the request of one of the sick, we all said a final Our Father aloud. As we reached the last words our Gestapo man shouted for us to move forward. A moment later I heard in German: "Fire!" There was a burst and I fell over together with Father Żychoń who had been holding me up all the time as I was weak after my operation. He dragged me down with him. I realized at once that I was still alive and unwounded, but I pretended to be dead since I knew that the Gestapo man finished off those still alive. When he came to me he kicked me in the knee, cursed

and fired at my head — the bullet passed by my ear. This was how I was saved. After this the next twelves were shot. In one of them a woman fell with her forehead on my legs. After a few more twelves had been shot she began screaming that she was alive and unwounded. One of the soldiers in the firing squad ran up and fired a burst at her with his riot gun. I could see this because I was lying in such a position with my head turned towards my legs that I could watch the execution without being seen. All the time I was terrified that a stray bullet might hit me since during the shooting their fire took in the bodies on the ground. I lay like this in constant fear of death until 11.30 p. m. of August 5, 1944. At this point the shooting stopped and the three executioners, lighting cigarettes went off towards Górczewska Street and stood on the parapet by the entrance into the tunnel. I began crawling amongst the bodies towards the house in front of which we had been shot... There had been a woman among my twelve. In her arms she was holding a child which might have been a year old. She had been shot with this child. She had begged the Gestapo man to shoot the child first and then her. He smiled and said nothing. The child was still whimpering and crying long after the shooting; I could hear it and the sound froze my blood. The Nazi executioners must also have heard it... I know that they shot the doctors from Wola Hospital because I saw them after they had been shot... According to my calculations — and I saw the whole courtyard covered with bodies from the house into which I had crawled — about 2,000 persons were shot..."

In a macaroni factory at 60 Wolska Street, civilians brought in groups were machine-gunned. The bodies were piled one metre high. One of the survivors of this execution, Władysław Pec, has described it in an affidavit:*

"I was in the cellar of 25 Płocka Street and realizing that there were mass executions taking place in Nos. 23,25, and 31, I man-

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1067.

aged to escape into the macaroni factory at 60 Wolska Street, only because the factory abutted on our house. In the cellar of the factory I found a congested crowd of civilians, most of them women and children. At about noon on August 5, 1944, the Germans set fire to the factory, the cellar became too hot, the civilians went out — 57 men and a slightly larger number of women and children. I and ten other men remained in hiding in the cellar; but after a while the gendarmes searching the cellar with the help of a dog found us and dragged us out. I saw a crowd standing in the middle of the courtyard into which the Germans ferreting around the site drove everybody they found hiding. By the gate a machine gun was mounted on a tripod. The officer in charge of the gendarmes gave orders to separate the men from the women. A higher-ranking officer of the gendarmerie arrived and consulted with the officer in charge of the group for about ten minutes after which the women were told to go out into Wolska Street and proceed to the Church of St. Wojciech. My wife, who had been ordered by the Wehrmacht to go to the church at 10.30 a.m. on August 4 (which saved her life), was already in the church. She told me that the group of women from the macaroni factory never reached the church and to this day none of them has ever been found. From Poles employed by the Gestapo to burn the bodies in Wola, I learned that the group of women and children from the macaroni factory (over 60 in number) had been shot that same day in the square opposite St. Wojciech's in a spot now marked by a cross. After the women had left the courtyard, we men were told to stand by the wall with our hands raised; then there was a series of bursts from the machine gun aimed at our heads. I was hit in the right arm near the elbow... I was covered with blood from my raised arm and fell. When the bursts and groans died down I heard single shots being fired. The gendarmes moved around the bodies prodding them with their boots to see if anyone was still alive, after which they finished him off with a single shot. The place was full of gendarmes and the execu-

tions were carried out by about six of them, one of whom operated the machine gun. After some time, while lying with my face covered by my bleeding arm, I heard noises from the direction of the street, then bursts of firing, groans, appeals for mercy, and single shots. I realized that a new group had arrived to be shot. After this five more groups were brought for execution, and two bodies fell on top of me. The executions went on until 6 p.m., with intervals for finishing off the wounded and bringing in new groups..."

On Płocka Street, civilians from the surrounding houses were herded into No. 23 and machine-gunned. Some of the bodies were taken into the yard of the "Ursus" factory and burned there. Stanisław Biernacki has described this execution in an affidavit:

"We were hiding in the corridor together with the occupants of the whole house. The Germans were throwing grenades into some of the rooms on the ground floor. Then all of us were ordered to go out into the courtyard and line up in three ranks, with the men separate from the women and children. The men were on the right, the women and children on the left. One of the Germans brought a machine gun on a fruit and vegetable barrow and mounted it opposite the lined up occupants of the house. Five Germans stood by the gate, the rest formed up on the garden side. The German who had set up the machine gun spat and went off. Presumably he was unable to work it. A second soldier came up; he was tall, freckled, round-faced, red-haired, wearing a tunic, trousers, and a forage cap on his head; he pulled the trigger and let off three bursts at the men and women and children. At the moment the German pulled the trigger I ducked into the window of the caretaker's room and tumbled in; I hid under the bed. I heard one of the Germans walking along the ranks of the murdered victims and finishing off with his rifle those who still showed signs of life. After a few minutes there was silence and I came out of my hiding-

place in the caretaker's room. I scrambled over the bodies of the occupants of the house..."

These have all been examples of large-scale butchery at specially selected places; but on August 5, 1944, the Germans also shot smaller groups of civilians. The sites included Nos. 151, 143, 105, 109, 101, 78 and 4 Wolska Street, the church of St. Wawrzyniec (St. Laurence), Górczewska Street, and Staszica Street. A great many more people were shot in their homes, in cellars, attics, on staircases; many perished in the flames of the blazing houses. In the case of a number of murders, particularly those committed on a smaller scale, the Germans left no trace of their crime.

On the night of August 5-6, after capturing the position in which the insurgents were holding out on the corner of Młynarska and Wolska streets the whole of Wolska street and the area around it passed into German hands. In the newly taken area the civilians became the victims of further atrocities. Soldiers burst into the buildings, threw grenades and fired into the hallways and flats. Many people were killed on staircases, in the cellars and out in the courtyards. Even people jumping out of their burning homes were fired at. For example, 100 people in the cellar of 26 Wolska Street were killed with grenades. 100 men were shot in the back of the neck on Młynarska Street, all the occupants of the neighbouring houses were shot in 90 Krochmalna Street.

On the evening of August 5 and throughout the following night the St. Lazarus Hospital, situated between Wolska, Karolkowa and Leszno streets, was the scene of an atrocious massacre. In the wards there were about 300 sick, about 300 wounded, the hospital staff and about 600 civilians who had taken refuge in the hospital. Units of the SS, gendarmerie and Vlasovites entered the first hospital building from the Wolska Street side. After robbing everyone of their valuables and watches, they murdered almost all the patients who had been taken down into the shelter, as well as the patients and others in the wards, using gre-

nades and rifles. The same thing happened to those in the other hospital buildings. In the main building on Leszno Street everyone was driven out into the courtyard and shot against the wall or in the cellars. The seriously ill who could not move were murdered in their beds. An account of the massacre in the cellars was given in an affidavit by one of the survivors, Maria Kamińska.*

"On August 4, 1944 I was in the St. Lazarus Hospital as a patient... Standing up I could see the soldiers firing and throwing grenades through the windows of the shelter in which the seriously ill were lying. After a while several persons in our group were ordered to go down to the cellar next to the one from which we had been taken. Immediately afterwards they started taking people in small groups. I was the last in my group. When my turn came, as I walked down the stairs I knew what was going to happen. There was a light on in the cellar. Along the corridor here there were several rooms. As I came down the stairs I saw through the open door bodies lying on the floor of the third room. At the door stood soldiers with drawn revolvers. The three persons in front of me stepped onto the bodies and the soldiers at the door shot them in the back of the head. Seeing that an execution was taking place I began to scream and struggle. A soldier grabbed me and the woman behind me by the shoulder and pushed us into the first room in the cellar on the left of the entrance. On the threshold I fell over without being hit and felt the woman fall across my legs. After this other persons entered and were shot. Several bodies were lying on top of me. Lying beside a cupboard with bandages, I managed to dress the wounds of a man who was still alive. When the executions in this room were over, at a rough guess there were about 50 bodies in the room. Two soldiers poured some liquid over the corpses by the door and set fire to them. The wounded took to their heels, the soldiers ran after them and I do not know

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1157.

if they succeeded in escaping. Taking advantage of the absence of the soldiers I and the other wounded man jumped over the burning corpses..."

Only about 50 members of the medical and nursing staff were taken off to St. Stanisław Hospital. All the rest, apart from a small number who managed to hide or escape into the grounds of Karol and Maria Hospital were murdered. Some of the bodies were burned in the blazing buildings or on pyres; the rest were buried in the hospital grounds.

After its seizure, the St. Stanisław Hospital for infectious diseases at 37 Wolska Street was also cleared of its staff and all the patients who could stand on their feet were lined up in fours; they were taken out into the street a few groups at a time and shot as they went through the gate. After about twenty had been shot the hospital director managed to persuade the soldiers to suspend the executions; a delegation from the hospital board escorted by soldiers were sent to Major Hartlieb, the chief medical officer of the Reinefarth Combat Group, to get him to stop the executions and save the hospital from destruction. As a result of these negotiations, Major Hartlieb called off the executions. The course of this parley was described in an affidavit made by Dr. Joanna Kryńska.*

"The escort led our group to a railway embankment where it turned out there was no field hospital. At a table sat Major Stabsarzt Hartlieb from the Rheinefarth Combat Group. He turned to the escort and said: 'What have you brought them for? We don't need any Poles, we will only have to shoot them!' I went up to Dr. Hartlieb and informed him that a German officer had given his word of honour that we would not be shot. Later Dr. Hartlieb told us that there were express orders from Himmler to shoot all the Poles in Warsaw regardless of age or sex, and that Warsaw was to be levelled, in order to show Europe what rising against the Germans meant. Then Dr. Hartlieb

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1207.

left us under guard and went off by motorcycle to St. Stanisław Hospital to check that the German officer really had given his word that we would not be shot. On his return he informed us that after intervening with the authorities he had secured permission not to have us shot..."

The units which had taken St. Lazarus Hospital entered the adjoining children's hospital of Karol and Maria at 136 Leszno Street on August 6. There were about 60 sick children, about 150 wounded and a certain number of civilians in the hospital. The children and some of the wounded were left in the hospital but the rest, including the doctors and hospital staff, were taken out into the street, formed into two groups, one of which was marched off towards Fort Bema, the other towards the Wola hospital. The wounded were separated and all trace of them disappeared. In the group taken to the Wola hospital the rest of the wounded were separated and orders were given to take them back to the children's hospital, where they were shot.

The same day a larger number of persons, including priests and monks from the Redemptorists' priory at 49 Karolkowa Street, were shot in the farm machinery warehouse at 81 Wolska Street. The victims, after being robbed, were executed in groups, 12 being taken at a time from the street into the warehouse. About 30 priests were shot first and they were followed by male civilians. After some time the executions were called off. There is an account of this shooting in an affidavit made by Stanisław Jaworski.*

"The group was finally halted on Wolska Street just beyond Sokółowska St. The priests were told to put their cases on the other side of the street. The priests and men who had been carrying the cases were formed up around them. In this way I was separated from my son who was with the priests. The 'Ukrainians' threw themselves on the cases and began to loot them. At the same time I saw a number of SS men order twelve of

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1257.

the priests to step out of the ranks; they led this group into the gate of the Kirchmeyer and Marczewski farm machinery warehouse opposite Sokołowska Street. Immediately afterwards I heard single revolver shots and counted twelve of them. After a while the SS men took twelve more priests and led them inside the warehouse as before. About 30 or 31 priests and monks were taken and after that they began to take the men, starting with those who had been carrying the suitcases and moving on to those on the opposite side of the street. The fifth twelve included my son and I was in the sixth. Inside the gate I saw two sheds at the back standing against a fence running parallel to Wolska Street. I and the other eleven were led across the centre of the yard towards the sheds. I was nearer the first shed from the Sokołowska Street side, and could only see this shed. I then saw that from the front of the shed to the back the ground was piled with corpses, one on top of the other, to a height of half a metre. I do not know if there were bodies in the other shed. When I was about 4 or 5 metres from the shed a motorcycle came into the yard, a German N.C.O. got off (I could not make out his unit and rank) and gave some paper to the SS man leading us. In the yard, apart from the 'Ukrainians' leading us, there was a large group of 'Ukrainians' and SS men. After reading the paper, the N.C.O. (I am not sure of his rank) who had been in charge of the execution, shouted 'raus!' after which our twelve was led out into Wolska Street, where we were added to the two twelves waiting outside the gate and all of us were re-attached to the group from which we had been taken and which was standing on the corner of Wolska and Sokołowska streets. The whole group was marched into Sokołowska Street. When we were turning into Sokołowska I saw on the side opposite to the Church of St. Wojciech a pile of bodies under the wall lying along a frontage about the same length as the church and about 2 metres high and the height of a man in width. At a rough estimate there must have been about 400 bodies. I got the impression that the bodies must have been stacked there and

that they had not just piled up during an execution. The heap was too high..."

Throughout that day and the ones that followed smaller numbers of people were shot, mainly men, the sick and those unfit for work. The greatest number of shootings took place in the graveyard of St. Wojciech's Church on Wolska Street and on the streets off it.

Later the Germans only shot people taken from the columns of evacuees from other areas of Warsaw, who were being marched to St. Wojciech's Church as an assembly area.

After capturing the whole of Wola and carrying out this mass slaughter, the Germans evacuated the rest of the inhabitants. The houses, after being looted were systematically set on fire and blown up.

The evacuees, after a short stop at St. Wojciech's Church were taken to the camp at Pruszków from where they were sent to concentration camps, labour camps for forced labour in the Reich; a relatively small number were sent to other localities in the Government General.

The church parsonage was taken over by the Warsaw Gestapo as an office for conducting "interrogations" of the groups of people brought from the captured parts of Warsaw. These interrogations were mainly designed to catch young men suspected of being involved in the Uprising; they were usually shot in the vicinity of the church.

To wipe out all traces of the murders, right at the beginning of the Uprising the Germans formed two special brigades of Polish workers (50 in each) called the *Verbrennungskommando*. Their job was to burn or bury the bodies of the victims. A description of this gruesome task was given by Franciszek Zasada in an affidavit.*

"Both groups detained on the third floor were formed into a corps for burning bodies. In charge of the corps was Gestapo

* Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1234.

officer Neuman (he had one star on his shoulder) from Berlin. On the morning of August 7, 1944, our group was led out into the yard; we were ordered to undress and, wearing only trousers, were hustled down Sokołowska Street to Wolska Street and made to burn the bodies. Together with my group I burned bodies in the following places: on the odd-numbered side of Wolska Street — in the courtyard of No. 91, we found the bodies of about 100 men who had been shot. We burned them on the spot. In the farm machinery warehouse at 85 Wolska Street we found about 300 bodies in cassocks and about 80 in ordinary clothes. We burned them on the spot. On the same side as the warehouse, a little way down the street, at No. 83, we found the bodies of about fifty men who had been shot. Many of the bodies had bandages on them. At 60 Wolska Street, in the yard of the macaroni factory, we found a pile of bodies about 2 metres high, 20 metres long and 15 metres wide. Most of them were men and only some women and children. It took us several hours to burn these bodies. At a rough guess there must have been over 2,000 of them.

“While we were burning these bodies a Gestapo man with three stars on his shoulder, blond, swarthy and of medium height, whose name I do not know, brought a number of men dressed in civilian clothes from the street and shot them immediately. We burned these bodies also. At the corner of Płocka Street our group was told to sit down, after which one of the Gestapo men addressed us saying that our lives were being spared for working on the burning of the bodies; then he sent six men to fetch food from the neighbouring houses and after it was brought we went back to Sokołowska Street. Here we were given 50 loaves of bread, 50 packets of cigarettes and coffee. During the night we could hear bursts of firing. The next day after assembling us in the courtyard the Germans announced that any gold found among the bodies was to be handed over to them and that we must report it if we found anyone alive in the cellars; failure to carry out either of these orders would mean death. After the

address we were taken off to burn bodies. We entered the "Ursus" factory by the large gate on Wolska Street. The yard, all the way from the gate to the back wall on Skierniewicka Street, was covered with the bodies of men, women and children. There must have been about 5,000 of them. It took us all day to burn them. We made a bonfire in the middle of the large yard on the Wolska Street side. We laid planks on the ground and put bodies on top of them, covered these with another layer of planks and more bodies on top of these. Then we poured over the pile some inflammable liquid given us by Germans in 20-litre cans. I do not know what this liquid was; there was no label on the cans.

"Much later I saw charred bones and skulls among the ashes. I do not know if anyone removed them.

"In the evening we took smaller numbers of bodies from 47, 49 and 54 Wolska Street. There were 100 in No. 47 lying in a water-filled pit and 3 in No. 49. Later we were given dressings, soap, towels and clothing, all of it looted from the surrounding houses. In addition two of us were allowed to cook some food.

"The next day we made a tour of the gateways on Wolska Street removing small numbers of bodies.

"On August 9, 1944, we came to the 'Frasaszek' factory. In the main yard and down one side from the shelter as far as the gate there were the bodies of about 6,000 men. We worked all day burning these bodies. I saw the bodies of tramwaymen, watchmen and policemen. In the shelter of the 'Frasaszek' factory's main block the Germans found valuables and expensive products such as sardines, vodka, etc. Two horse carts took these things away. Neuman took a necklace worth over 200,000 zlotys. From then on we saw the Gestapo men stealing for themselves.

"On August 10, 1944, we went to the Municipal Transport Works. There were about 300 bodies lying next to the main sheds.

"Next we went to 29 Wolska Street, the Biernacki Palace. In

the grounds we found about 600 bodies of women, children and old people including three priests, belonging, I learned later, to the Order of Redemptorists in Karolkowa Street. Four or five of the bodies were lying just by the railings. We burned the bodies where they lay.

"On the lot at 24 Wolska Street, where there is now a timber-yard, but which once contained a merry-go-round and a dance hall, we found the bodies of about 1,000 men, women and children. We burned the bodies on the spot and the next day removed the charred bones and threw them in a pit formed by a huge bomb crater. When we were taking away the charred bones I saw the bodies of 5 or 6 newly-murdered men; we took these away as well and buried them in the pit about 10 metres deep. Next we were taken to St. Lazarus Hospital and in the first courtyard gathered about 5,000 bodies from all over the buildings, even from the beds and operating tables. We had to make three bonfires. Apart from those we burned we also buried a large number of bodies.

"From St. Lazarus Hospital on Wolska Street we went to the corner of Karolkowa and Leszno streets, where we found the bodies of 42 men and women in a factory. From there we were taken down Żytunia Street to Młynarska and to the cemetery of the Evangelical church. In the cemetery, mainly at the back, there was a large number of single bodies — insurgents, Germans and civilians.

"In the corset factory at 6 Wolska Street we found about 500 bodies in the yard and the garden. From there we went down Wolska Street past the viaduct and took the bodies from all the yards on the even side.

"In Sowiński Park we found about 6,000 bodies. They lay tumbled over by the railings on the Wolska Street side in a heap 1.4 metres high, 25 metres long and 25 metres wide. We burned them in piles on the square in the park. People from my group also brought bodies to Sowiński Park from the Hankiewicz house

and from houses on Elekcyjna and Ordonia Street. I myself was not involved in this so I do not know exactly how many there were. After this we collected bodies in groups of 20-30 and 50 from yards on Ogrodowa, Leszno and Solna streets.

"While we were burning bodies at 43 or 45 Ogrodowa Street, the Germans caught two men aged 54 and 22, a father and son, and shot them both. At 11 Elektoralna Street the Gestapo men, in the presence of Gutkowski, shot eight women whom they had dragged out of their homes.

"From 18 Elektoralna Street we took 18 bodies, from 58 Ogrodowa Street — about 40 bodies, from 20 Leszno Street — about 100 bodies from 5 or 7 Ogrodowa Street (I do not remember exactly) — about 30 bodies of women and children. At 25 Górczewska Street we took about 200 bodies from the courtyard, rooms, staircase and garden.

"From 31 to 26 Płocka Street (The Wola Hospital) we took about 200 bodies, many of them casualty cases with their arms and legs in splints. We took bodies from the stairs, corridors and street. We took about 40 bodies from the Franc and Janc fish store in the square by Mirowska Hall and Ciepła Street, and about 150 bodies from the cellars of Mirowska Hall.

Along Wolska Street, from No. 102 up to Elekcyjna Street, we took over a dozen bodies from each house.

"On Przechodnia Street (I do not remember the number) we took the bodies of about 20 women and children..."

Atrocities against civilians never reached the same mass scale in other parts of the city as they did in Wola on that tragic August 5. Nevertheless, wherever the Nazi troops went, they left behind them a trail of blood of tens of thousands of victims. The diminished scale of the slaughter was probably the result of the cancelling of the order to murder all civilians regardless of age or sex.

The Reinefarth Combat Group, after gaining control of Wola, split into two wings. One of them moved down Wolska, Chłodna and Elektoralna streets towards the Saxon Gardens area with

the object of joining up with the troops of General Stahel, which were surrounded by the insurgents, and then attacking the Old Town from the south. The other wing was sent through Powązki, the ghetto and Muranów to attack the Old Town from the north.

On August 7 the Wolska-Chłodna wing joined up with General Stahel's troops. In its wake it left many atrocities, the worst of which was a mass murder in one of the Mirowska Halls when a large group of men were shot, including some brought from the cellars of 30 Ogrodowa Street and a number of men who had previously been employed to take away the bodies of the victims. The men were lined up in threes, taken inside the hall several batches at a time and shot by the wall. The bodies were thrown into a large bomb crater in which a bonfire had been lit and burned.

The same day about twenty people from the Maltese Hospital at 42 Senatorska Street were murdered; all the patients and staff of the hospital were dragged out into the street and the buildings burned.

After overrunning the area round the Grand Theatre the Germans carried out mass murders on August 8 and 9; the victims were men brought from Fredro, Wierzbowa, and Senatorska streets and the Saxon Gardens. The executions took place on the stage and in the auditorium of the theatre.

The same day individuals were shot in the building of the seminary at 52 Krakowskie Przedmieście. There were also many cases of rape.

At 5 Kozia Street a large group of men was shot on August 10. They were led into the courtyard in groups of ten and shot in the back of the head. The bodies were burned immediately. There were other murders in the Saxon Gardens, the Luxembourg Gallery, the Church of St. Anthony on Senatorska street, and other places. On the whole, women and children were excluded from these executions.

Along the route followed by the second wing mass executions took place on the site of a fuel dump at 59 Okopowa Street where the victims were burned immediately, being laid in layers on piles of wood, and on the site of warehouses on Stawki Street. The main victims here were old people, men unfit for work and persons suspected of having taken part in the Uprising.

The Old Town was taken on September 2 and the atrocities followed. The victims were mainly the sick and wounded in the hospitals and temporary first-aid stations. The Germans did not even spare the aged and crippled in various institutions. Particularly savage was the treatment of the wounded who were murdered ruthlessly and often burned alive. Among the hospitals where the Germans ran riot were those at 10 Freta Street, 7 Długa Street, 25 Podwale Street ("The Crooked Lantern"), 46 Podwale Street ("The Black Swan"), 24 Miodowa Street and 1/3 Kiliński Street. Some of the civilians and less sick were evacuated from the Old Town and many of them were shot along the way on Podwale and Wąski Dunaj streets, on Castle Square and in Mariensztat.

Ochota was the operating area of General Rohr's troops and the notorious Kamiński Brigade. The atrocities committed in this district, after the insurgents had pulled out on August 5 included the murder of civilians, by groups or individually, the throwing of living persons into the blazing houses, the rape of women, and wholesale looting. The most savage of these crimes was the slaughter of the patients and staff of the Skłodowska-Curie Radium Institute at 15 Wawelska Street on August 5. There were executions of civilians, mainly men, at 20b and 24 Grójecka Street, in the Staszic Colony, the student's hostel on Narutowicz Square, in the Mokotów Gardens at 52/54 Wawelska Street, at the Father Baudouin Institute, at 80 Nowogrodzka Street, on Pługa Street and on Uniwersytecka Street. Single individuals were murdered and women raped in the Child

Jesus Hospital and the birth clinic, and also in the "Zieleniak"* where people thrown out of their homes had been collected.

In Mokotów one of the scenes of mass slaughter was the site of the former General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, partially destroyed in 1939, situated at 1 Ujazdowskie Avenue next to the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Avenue. There were mass executions here from the first days of the Uprising with the bodies burned in specially constructed incinerators. Once the Germans had taken Czerniaków, Sadyba and Siekierki they also began executing men from the evacuation transports, if they suspected them of having fought in the Uprising. There were also mass executions in the prison on Rakowiecka Street as well as in the barracks on the same street and on Dworkowa Street; here the slaughter included the killing on September 27 of about 100 insurgents caught coming out of the sewers. All the priests and brothers were murdered in the underground chapel of the Jesuits at 61 Rakowiecka Street. There was another mass murder on the children's playground at 2/4 Bagatela Street in the first days of the Uprising.

It needs hardly be said that this list of executions does not cover all the Nazi atrocities during the Uprising. These are only the most typical and vilest examples of their savagery.

The Germans, in spite of all the efforts they made, did not succeed in wiping out all traces of their crimes. After the end of the war it was still possible to find and collect an enormous quantity of human ash on the sites where the bodies of the victims had been burned. These included the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces — 5,578 kg., Sowiński Park, 1,120 kg., 60 Wolska Street — 1,029 kg., 47 Dzielna Street — 600 kg., St. Stanisław Hospital and the "Franaszek" factory — 600 kg., 59 Okopowa Street — 192 kg., the "Dobrolin" factory — 120 kg., the Skłodowska-Curie Radium Institute — 10 kg., Górczewska,

* The name given in Warsaw to a walled site on the western fringe of the city where there was a fruit and vegetable market.

Młynarska and Wolska streets — 124 kg., and Gęsia Street — 2,180 kg.*

The order to destroy and loot Warsaw remained in force even after the Uprising was put down.

For these “heroic deeds” three of the unit commanders were decorated by Hitler: von dem Bach, Reinefarth and Dirlwanger. The latter was specially congratulated by Governor General Frank, who expressed his appreciation for “the exemplary action of his combat group during the fighting in Warsaw,” at a reception held in his honour in Wawel Castle on October 16, 1944.

The extent of the slaughter in Warsaw is eloquently summed up in a statement made by Reinefarth, reported in No. 294 of the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* (Poznań) for November 5, 1944, concerning the “heroic action” of his Combat Group during the Warsaw Uprising: “We have both defeated the enemy and dealt him losses amounting to about a quarter of a million people...”

* Report of the Warsaw Funeral Establishment on the exhumation of ashes on March 17, 1947; Main Commission Records 1100/z/V p. 1279.

Epilogue

For over five years the Nazi flag with its black swastika hung from the Royal Tower of Wawel Castle in Cracow. For the Poles these five years were a long, unimaginable nightmare. In its political plans Nazism had, as we have seen, set itself the task of physically wiping out the Polish nation, and was not fastidious about the methods used to reach this objective.

In this book there has been room only for a brief account of just some of the worst excesses committed by the Nazis in Poland. The emphasis has been mainly on the actions aimed at the direct extermination of a people who lived there for centuries, actions which resulted in the death of millions of Polish citizens.

The scope of this work has made it impossible to discuss in more detail all the measures of the Nazi authorities who in every field of life were guided by this single motive of destroying the Poles as a nation.

A few facts and figures taken from the report of the War Reparations Office at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers will serve to illustrate this.* These dry figures bear the most eloquent testimony to the infamy of the occupation.

During the war and occupation, between 1939 and 1945, no less than 6,028,000 Polish citizens lost their lives. Of these,

* Report on War Losses and Damage in Poland in 1939—1945. Warszawa, January 1947.

644,000 — that is 10.7 per cent — died as the result of military operations and 5,384,000 — that is 89.9 per cent — as a result of the terror unleashed by the Nazis. This ratio speaks for itself.

Out of the total number of victims of the terror:

3,577,000 died in death camps or as a result of the “liquidation” of ghettos, pacification actions, executions, etc.

1,286,000 died in concentration camps, penal labour camps etc., or in prison

521,000 died outside the camps as a result of wounds, injuries, overwork, physical depletion, etc.

In this total figure 3,200,000 were Polish citizens of Jewish descent. The vast majority of them perished in the mass extermination campaigns as victims of racial persecution.

Out of all the countries overrun by the Nazis the greatest losses in human lives were suffered by Poland. These came to 220 per thousand inhabitants, as compared with Holland where the proportion was 22, or ten times less, and Belgium — 7, or over 30 times less. In Yugoslavia, which is next to Poland in human losses, the proportion was 108 per thousand inhabitants, that is less than half the Polish figure.

A milder form of terror practiced by the Nazis was the deportation of Poles for forced labour in Germany or the territories occupied by the Reich. A total of 2,460,000 Polish citizens fell victim to the deportations. Only a relatively small number of them had voluntarily reported for labour. “Recruitment” normally took the form of round-ups when able-bodied men and women were dragged off the streets or even from their homes and then sent off as manpower for industry or agriculture. After the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944 many thousands of civilians suffered the same fate.

Pursuing their objective of the physical destruction of the Polish nation the Nazis used not only methods of direct or indirect extermination but also of devastating the economic poten-

tial of the country. The losses suffered by Poland in this respect came to many thousands of millions dollars. Partly these were caused by the crippling economic policy of the occupation authorities and partly by military operations, especially as a result of the "scorched earth" strategy followed by the Nazis as they were driven from Polish territory by the Soviet offensive in 1944-1945. Enormous losses were also caused by straightforward looting camouflaged as confiscation or requisitioning of various types of goods (factory plant, for example), which were taken to the Reich.

It would be impossible to give even a cursory picture of the economic havoc dealt Poland during the Second World War. To give an example, the Germans destroyed about 21,000 factories, 80,000 artisans' workshops and 200,000 shops on Polish territory.

The largest losses were suffered by Warsaw. In 1939 it had been severely damaged by bombing, most of it unwarranted by military needs, (the bombing of the ancient Royal Castle, several hospitals, etc.). In 1943, as a result of the liquidation of the ghetto, the whole area in which it was situated was laid waste. During the Uprising, and particularly after its crushing and the expulsion of the inhabitants, Warsaw was not only thoroughly looted but also systematically devastated. In terms of buildings destroyed the losses came to 80 per cent of those standing before the war.

The campaign against Polish culture and education occupied a large place in the execution of the Nazi political programme in Poland. It took the form not only of murdering the intelligentsia who died in their hundreds of thousands in executions and various types of camps, but also of destroying hundreds of architectural monuments, including the Royal Castle and Cathedral in Warsaw. Practically every statue in every Polish town was pulled down. Many priceless library collections were laid waste. Countless works of art in public and private collections were destroyed or looted.

The instructions drawn up by Himmler and endorsed by Hitler on the treatment of foreign nationals in the East were put into effect by the occupation authorities with inspired thoroughness. All Polish educational institutions, from universities to technical colleges and secondary schools, were closed. The level of instruction in the primary and vocational schools was greatly lowered. The teaching of Polish history, literature, geography, etc., was banned.

The Germans hoped to reduce the cultural level of the Poles by forbidding the formation of any organization of a cultural nature, by a judicious selection of theatre and cinema programmes, by promoting worthless publications while at the same time banning the printing of masterpieces of Polish literature, particularly of a patriotic or historical character.

A great amount of effort was put into the task of corrupting Polish society both in the towns and countryside. For example, all bonuses given to farmers for delivering their compulsory consignments of produce on time were in the shape of vodka. The authorities turned a blind eye to the illicit distillation of alcohol. In Warsaw, gambling halls were opened which only Poles were allowed to attend. Prostitution was tolerated. The printing and distribution of pornography was encouraged.

A number of economic measures in the Government General, aimed at total exploitation of the land for the benefit of the Reich, led to a catastrophic food situation in the towns as well as in the villages. Even top officials in the administration, from Frank down, realized that the devastation of the food resources of the country ordered by the Reich leaders was taking on tragic proportions. An excerpt from Frank's Diary is eloquent evidence of this: "The Senior Health Counsellor, Dr. Walbaum, expressed his opinion on the health situation among the Poles. Investigations by his department have shown that the majority of Poles are consuming barely 600 calories while the normal needs of a man are 2,200 calories. The Poles are so depleted

that they are easy prey to typhoid fever... The increase in tuberculosis is equally disturbing.”*

After the war, the War Reparations Office at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers found that, in actual fact, the number of T.B. cases during the occupation exceeded the average for a similar length of time before the war by 1,140,000.**

Following Himmler's instructions, the occupation authorities tried, without success in fact, to split the Polish nation from the inside by creating artificially separate racial groups. For instance, they tried to form the highlanders living in the region of the Tatra Mountains into a separate nation (*Goralenvolk*) — a scheme that the local inhabitants reacted to with a complete lack of enthusiasm.

These few examples, which could easily be multiplied, have been quoted only to show that the account given in this book is only a small fragment of the whole story of the occupation in Poland. It must be added that even in this account we have not covered every point of the subjects raised in it, or drawn on all the material available.

We have tried to present an objective and documented picture of events which though they belong to the past are not so distant that we can forget them. Our chief motive in recalling them is as a warning that they should not happen again. Unfortunately, we cannot ignore the signs pointing to the danger of their recurrence.

Despite the collapse of the Nazi Reich in 1945, the forces which brought about the Second World War and were responsible for the death, suffering and misery of many millions of human beings were not totally destroyed or incapacitated. Today they are again trying to re-assert themselves. There is evidence of this in the resurgence of militarism in West Germany and in the emergence of neofascism and racism here and there.

* Hans Frank's Diary: *Tagebuch* 1941/III, p. 820.

** Report on War Losses and Damage in Poland in 1939—1945. Warszawa, January 1947.